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**Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions**

# Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/154 on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa. It updates information contained in the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session (A/69/339) and covers the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015. The report has been coordinated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and includes information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the International Labour Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons. It also includes information drawn from publicly available reports by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

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# I. Introduction

1. Over the past year, hundreds of thousands of people on the African continent have fled their homes and sought safety in neighbouring countries and further abroad.[1] While unresolved conflicts in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan continued, additional conflict in Burundi and Nigeria further compounded the displacement situation. As at the end of 2014, the number of refugees in sub-Saharan Africa stood at 3.7 million, representing an increase for the fifth consecutive year and some 759,000 more refugees than the year before. There were also more than 11.4 million internally displaced persons in sub-Saharan Africa, representing a third of the global total.[2]

2. Those simultaneous emergencies, both new and protracted, have intensified the burden on host countries and communities and placed unprecedented demands on humanitarian organizations in terms of emergency response capacity. During the reporting period, the humanitarian community confronted two emergencies in Africa for which a level-3 emergency response[3] was activated, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, both of which required the appointment of regional refugee coordinators and additional staff and resources. Other major challenges included the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa and severe flooding in parts of Malawi and Mozambique. Some countries also experienced a resurgence of xenophobia.

3. Nevertheless, the tradition of hospitality in Africa remained strong. Ethiopia kept its borders open to new arrivals, adding to the more than 700,000 refugees already receiving protection on its territory and making it the largest refugee-hosting country in sub-Saharan Africa and the fifth-largest in the world. With more than 551,000 refugees, Kenya was the second-largest refugee-hosting country in sub-Saharan Africa. While the majority of refugees remained in exile, there were several breakthroughs that opened opportunities for durable solutions, including the naturalization of former refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania and local integration in Zambia. Significant efforts were also made to identify and resolve situations of statelessness across the continent.

# II. Subregional overviews

## A. East Africa, including the Horn of Africa

4. East Africa, including the Horn of Africa, remained the subregion with the largest refugee and internally displaced populations, reaching 2.6 million refugees and 6.5 million internally displaced persons as at the end of 2014. Food insecurity, insufficient land to host the increasing number of refugees, restricted freedom of movement and impediments to humanitarian access were major challenges across the subregion. As at mid-2015, some 315,000 Sudanese refugees continued to live in

[1] The present report is concerned exclusively with sub-Saharan Africa.

[2] See the website of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Available from www.internal-displacement.org.

[3] Level-3 emergencies are defined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee as major sudden onset humanitarian crises triggered by natural disasters or conflict which require system-wide mobilization.

14 camps in eastern Chad, while the unrest in South Sudan, which necessitated a scaled-up level-3 emergency response, dominated the humanitarian landscape.

**South Sudan situation**

5. Despite efforts to drive the peace process forward, fighting continued throughout the year, especially in Upper Nile, Unity and Jonglei States. That resulted in the internal displacement of approximately 1.5 million persons, including more than 166,000 who sought temporary protection near or within United Nations peacekeeping sites. Between December 2013 and June 2015, 639,000 South Sudanese had fled across borders to Ethiopia (223,000), the Sudan (188,000), Uganda (156,000) and Kenya (72,000).

6. Heavy rains and flooding in Ethiopia made many of the camps inhospitable and complicated the logistics of relocating 47,000 refugees to safer grounds in the new Jewi camp by July 2015. In Uganda, South Sudanese refugees continued to be provided plots of land to encourage self-sufficiency. In the Sudan, a memorandum of understanding signed in December 2014 by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Commissioner for Refugees and the Directorate of Passports and Immigration of the Ministry of Interior established a framework for the registration of South Sudanese refugees and the issuance of identity cards.

**Somali refugee situation**

7. Humanitarian organizations gained access to 13 new areas in Somalia, enabling the provision of humanitarian assistance. However, continued insecurity and the absence of rule of law and basic services in some areas continued to discourage refugee returns. The Global Initiative on Somali Refugees provides a framework for identifying solutions for the nearly 1 million Somali refugees in East Africa and the Horn of Africa.

8. The attack at Garissa University in Kenya in April 2015 heightened concerns about national security. UNHCR and the Governments of Kenya and Somalia are working together on several agreed objectives, including enhancing security for the nearly 350,000 refugees in the Dadaab camps; ensuring that returns from Dadaab are voluntary and that they take place in conditions of safety, dignity and sustainability; and expanding the pilot project for voluntary returns within Somalia. A portfolio of cross-border projects is being developed in support of those objectives.

9. Since the beginning of 2015, the conflict in Yemen has forced some 22,000 Yemeni refugees and persons of other nationalities to flee across the Gulf of Aden towards Somalia. An additional 20,000 persons of various nationalities, including 2,000 registered Yemeni refugees, sought safety in Djibouti.

## B. Central Africa and the Great Lakes

10. By June 2015, there were over 1.1 million refugees and 3.3 million internally displaced persons in the Central Africa and Great Lakes subregion, with the Democratic Republic of the Congo accounting for the majority of the internally displaced persons.

**Burundi emergency**

11. In early April 2015, political turmoil and violence erupted in Burundi. Since then, more than 144,000 Burundians have crossed into the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. UNHCR and its partners launched a regional refugee response plan to protect and assist refugees in the neighbouring countries.

**Central African Republic situation**

12. In the Central African Republic, the deployment of United Nations peacekeeping forces in September 2014 brought hope for the stabilization of the security situation. However, continued fighting and human rights abuses targeting civilians resulted in massive displacement and the spillover of violence into Cameroon, Chad, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As at the end of 2014, humanitarian organizations worked to respond to the protection and assistance needs of more than 438,000 internally displaced persons and some 412,000 refugees in the neighbouring countries.

13. Many of the Central African refugees arrived in exile severely malnourished, having walked for weeks to reach safety. Humanitarian agencies coordinated a multisectoral response to the refugee influx, strengthening assistance and enhancing reception conditions for new arrivals. Cameroon hosts the largest number of Central African refugees, approximately 245,000, with most spread across more than 300 sites and villages in the east and Adamaoua regions. The extensive border presented a challenge, with more than 30 entry points and an operational area of some 50,000 square kilometres. The crisis has also forced 91,000 refugees to flee into Chad since December 2013.

14. The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons called for the Central African Republic to uphold its obligations under the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) and urged that the national reconciliation dialogue be inclusive of the rights of internally displaced persons. The Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation in May 2015, and the pact for peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction which it adopted, brought hopes for an end to the conflict and a solution to the humanitarian crisis.

**Democratic Republic of the Congo**

15. Conflict continued to affect the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in the Kivus, Katanga and Ituri provinces. By the end of 2014 there were over 2.7 million persons internally displaced and 358,000 Congolese refugees in Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

## C. West Africa

16. As at the end of 2014, West Africa hosted some 252,000 refugees and 1.5 million internally displaced persons. The humanitarian situation was dominated by the impact of Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria, which produced mass displacement and affected security in neighbouring countries. The outbreak of the Ebola virus posed a serious risk to refugees and host populations in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra

Leone, and humanitarian organizations worked to prevent infection in refugee camps and ensure that refugees were included in national prevention and preparedness activities.

**Mali situation**

17. The signing of a peace and reconciliation agreement between armed groups and the Government of Mali in June 2015 opened possibilities for stabilization. However, many challenges lie ahead, including a fragile security situation in northern Mali, which is not yet conducive for organized voluntary return. More than 90,000 people remained internally displaced as at June 2015, including an additional 59,000 displaced by renewed fighting in May. Some 128,000 Malian refugees remained in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger as at the end of 2014.

**Nigeria situation**

18. Despite some military progress in early 2015 in recapturing territory from Boko Haram control and releasing some hostages, during the entire reporting period the situation in north-eastern Nigeria generally deteriorated. Frequent attacks on civilians and cross-border attacks into Cameroon, Chad and the Niger triggered internal displacement in these countries. As at June 2015, some 1.4 million Nigerians were internally displaced and nearly 168,000 had sought refuge in the three neighbouring countries. In particular, the Niger, which ranks lowest on the human development index, has seen a sharp increase in the refugee population in the country. Over 100,000 Nigerians and citizens of the Niger arrived in the Diffa region seeking protection, and some 50,000 citizens of the Niger were internally displaced in 2015 due to a spillover of the conflict. Cameroon, meanwhile, received nearly 50,000 refugees, and the violence in Nigeria and in the Far North region of Cameroon displaced 82,000 Cameroonians. In addition, some 25,000 people were displaced in Chad (13,000 refugees and 12,000 internally displaced persons) in the context of the violence in north-eastern Nigeria.

## D. Southern Africa

19. Southern Africa continued to host some 174,700 refugees as at the end of 2014. Though the situation throughout the subregion remained relatively calm, there were reports of tensions related to the economic crisis in a number of countries. Humanitarian and protection activities focused on awareness-raising to counter xenophobia, redressing statelessness, advocacy related to mixed movements, strengthening national asylum systems and promoting self-reliance. In late 2014 and early 2015, heavy rains caused flooding in southern Africa, mainly in Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and affected some 1.82 million people, leaving many internally displaced. Humanitarian agencies delivered food and non-food items to flood victims in Malawi. In January 2015, the World Bank also approved $80 million in credit and loans to help Malawi reconstruct critical public infrastructure, restore agricultural livelihoods, enhance food security and improve disaster response and recovery capacities. In Mozambique, the humanitarian country team assisted the Government in its early recovery efforts.

20. In South Africa, xenophobia and violence against foreigners, including refugees and asylum seekers, resulted in the loss of lives, property damage and

displacement. United Nations agencies and partners worked with the Government and civil society to provide psychosocial support and assistance packages for the displaced, including rental subsidies and food vouchers, establish a 24-hour protection hotline and organize mass information campaigns to promote tolerance.

# III. Protection

21. Protection challenges included instances and threats of refoulement by some countries, trafficking, widespread sexual and gender-based violence, the forced recruitment of children and threats to the civilian nature of refugee camps. Disregard for international humanitarian law by parties to conflict was prevalent, compounded by fragmentation among armed groups with unclear chains of command. Humanitarian and human rights actors recorded incidents of extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrests and detention. Against that backdrop, the United Nations worked to support Governments in strengthening protection systems and responses.

## A. Addressing sexual and gender-based violence and specific needs

22. Refugee and internally displaced women and children were disproportionately affected by mass displacement in areas of conflict. In some areas of South Sudan, the percentage of female-headed households was close to 60, and women and girls faced a heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, including in sites specifically designated for the protection of civilians. Displacement increased the risk of some harmful traditional practices, such as early marriage, including in the Central African Republic. In the eastern area of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there were continued concerns linked to the heavy presence of armed groups, including incidents of sexual and gender-based violence. Furthermore, women encountered continued discrimination as they sought to access employment, reproductive health care and other services and to ensure a voice in decision-making processes affecting their lives.

23. Protection responses sought to be inclusive of individual differences of age, gender and diversity. In the context of refugee registration, profiling facilitated the identification of individuals with specific needs and vulnerabilities, including survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, unaccompanied minors and separated children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Emergency interventions on behalf of women included sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response programmes, the distribution of hygiene kits and the provision of lighting in camps.

24. During the reporting period, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) opened "safe spaces" for displaced women in internally displaced person and refugee settlements in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Mali, South Sudan and Uganda. Those facilities provided access to essential services and referrals for psychosocial and other survivor-related services and offered a location for women to share their experiences.

25. Conflicts across the region also exacerbated risks for children, including separation from families, physical and psychological harm, forced recruitment and

sexual and gender-based violence. Family tracing and the reunification of unaccompanied and separated children remained a priority in emergencies. In the Central African Republic, some 540 separated children were reunited with their families. In South Sudan, nearly 5,500 children were supported with community-based alternative care and family tracing and reunification.

## B. Asylum and migration

26. As mixed flows within Africa continued to rise, most countries demonstrated a firm commitment to the protection of refugees and generally fulfilled their international obligations. Whereas South Africa had been the leading destination country of new asylum seekers worldwide in the period 2008-2012, the number of new asylum claims in the country has declined since then, standing at 71,914 in 2014. Among those a total of 20,405 Zimbabweans applied for refugee status in 2014, compared with 16,420 in 2013. Efforts continued throughout the continent to strengthen national asylum systems. Several States were in the process of drafting or revising national refugee-related laws, and Rwanda adopted strengthened legislation in 2014 that included provisions on non-refoulement and access to economic and social rights. A new asylum act was passed in the Sudan in 2014; however, its provisions maintained restricted freedom of movement for refugees.

27. The African Union continued to support its member States in strengthening responses to transnational organized crime, notably trafficking and smuggling of persons, and in enhancing the protection of victims of trafficking in the Horn of Africa. Following consultations with the Governments of Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia and the Sudan, the African Union, with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR, convened a regional ministerial conference in Khartoum in October 2014 dedicated to human trafficking and smuggling in the Horn of Africa. Ministers from more than 15 countries of origin, transit and destination participated, and adopted a declaration and plan of action encouraging the development of national strategies to address smuggling and human trafficking, greater cooperation across borders and the sharing of best practices. The adoption of a declaration in the context of the European Union-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative in November 2014 was another positive step towards enhanced international cooperation.

28. During the reporting period, tens of thousands of African refugees and asylum seekers sought safety in countries outside their region, travelling as part of mixed movements. During the first six months of 2015, approximately one third of the 89,500 refugees and migrants who arrived by sea to Europe came from the African continent, predominantly from East Africa and the Horn of Africa. There was also an increase in mixed flows from the Horn of Africa to the Gulf of Aden. Nearly 92,000 new arrivals were recorded in 2014, the majority arriving in Yemen during the last five months of the year. Among the new arrivals, 23,000 were identified as refugees and asylum seekers. Over 37,000 persons had similarly crossed as at late May 2015.

## C. Statelessness

29. As at June 2015, 22 of the 54 African Union member States were parties to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954 and 15 were parties to the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961. During the reporting period, Guinea acceded to the 1961 Convention, the Niger acceded to the 1954 Convention and the Gambia and Mozambique acceded to both. The Niger reformed its nationality law to ensure gender equality in respect of acquisition, change and retention of nationality. Several additional countries were in the process of reviewing their nationality laws, with a view to removing gender discrimination.

30. An African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights report on the right to nationality was launched in January 2015 in Addis Ababa. In its report, the Commission urged African States to support the Commission's efforts to draft a protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the right to nationality in Africa, in line with resolution 277 adopted during the fifty-fifth ordinary session of the Commission in May 2014.

31. Following an amendment to its nationality law in 2013 that allows long-term residents to acquire nationality through a simple declaration procedure, Côte d'Ivoire continued its progress towards resolving the situation of an estimated 700,000 stateless persons, one of the largest in the world. To support efforts to address statelessness in the West African context, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and UNHCR organized a regional ministerial conference on statelessness in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in February 2015. The conference saw the adoption of the Abidjan Declaration of Ministers of ECOWAS Member States on Eradication of Statelessness, and several States made additional pledges to address statelessness, including through legal reform, the resolution of existing situations of statelessness and the strengthening of civil registration.

## D. Internal displacement

32. December 2014 marked the second anniversary of the entry into force of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). As at June 2015, 40 States were signatories to the Kampala Convention, and 24 had ratified it. United Nations organizations and partners remained engaged with national authorities in their efforts to develop policies and laws on internally displaced persons and implement the Kampala Convention. In particular, Somalia adopted a policy framework on displacement, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo prepared a draft bill on internally displaced persons during the reporting period. Despite those positive steps, much more needs to be done to address the situation of internal displacement on the continent.

# IV. Humanitarian response and constraints

## A. Delivery of assistance

### Education

33. United Nations organizations and partners continued to support education needs, particularly in emergencies, through the establishment of temporary learning spaces, the construction of permanent schools for host and refugee communities alike and the provision of school supplies. Displaced children were integrated into host community schools, where possible, to enhance social cohesion. Common challenges included an insufficient number of teachers, large classes, difficulty with retention and differences in languages of instruction. Those challenges were addressed through community campaigns, capacity-building for teachers and other measures.

34. In Somalia, United Nations partners worked to provide education in key areas of potential return. Meeting the education needs in other conflict-affected countries remained difficult: in South Sudan, an additional 400,000 children dropped out of school, largely in Upper Nile and Unity States, while in the Central African Republic almost 170,000 displaced children did not have access to public schools. Owing to the current crisis in Burundi, some displaced students may not be able to take national exams that are critical to obtaining school-leaving certificates and, therefore, to pursuing further education.

### Food and nutrition

35. In 2014, the World Food Programme (WFP) provided food assistance to more than 3 million refugees in 22 countries across sub-Saharan Africa. The vast majority were partially or entirely dependent on external assistance because of limited access to land, employment or other means for ensuring self-sufficiency and food security. Food needs were met through various modalities including direct food assistance or, when possible, through cash or food vouchers. That helped improve dietary diversity and empowered refugees to make their own choices. UNHCR and WFP implemented a regional policy of introducing biometric identification checks in refugee operations. At the same time, United Nations agencies continued to promote refugee self-reliance in protracted situations.

36. A major challenge in addressing growing needs remained the persistent shortfalls in funding. Food assistance was cut by at least 50 per cent for nearly 450,000 refugees in the major emergencies in the Central African Republic, Chad and South Sudan. Another 350,000 refugees, including in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda, saw their rations reduced by between 5 and 43 per cent. A media campaign by United Nations agencies drew attention to the impact of the shortages, including negative coping strategies and protection risks.

37. Malnutrition rates among children under 5 years old in most conflict-affected countries rose with the number of emergencies during the year, with global acute malnutrition rates among refugees and internally displaced children often above the emergency threshold of 15 per cent, and severe acute malnutrition in some areas exceeding 4 per cent. Seeking to minimize the potential for tensions, United Nations agencies increased efforts to meet the food and nutrition needs of both refugees and their host communities through better identification, targeting and assessment.

### Health

38. Emergency situations during the reporting period saw refugees arriving in countries of asylum in poor health and nutritional status. Consequently, high rates of under-5 mortality were observed in the first weeks of the emergencies. The main causes of mortality were measles, malaria, respiratory diseases and diarrhoea, as well as severe acute malnutrition. Through a multi-sectoral response including public health, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene, mortality rates were stabilized in the Central African Republic and Nigeria emergencies. Meanwhile, in the United Republic of Tanzania, efforts by the Government and humanitarian agencies resulted in an effective response by mid-2015 to a cholera outbreak in May 2015 among some of the 64,000 Burundians who had fled to the country. The provision of safe water and sanitation and the availability of treatment for cholera at multiple destinations prevented a deadly outbreak from becoming a catastrophe. Nevertheless, more than 4,600 people contracted the disease, leading to the deaths of 31 refugees and 3 nationals.

39. United Nations agencies provided reproductive health services in emergencies, quickly transitioning into more comprehensive programmes in refugee areas, such as for South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia. They continued to work with Governments and partners to deliver new vaccines within expanded programmes for immunizations and specifically improved access to the measles and polio vaccines in refugee emergencies. In 2015, pentavalent and pneumococcal vaccination campaigns were implemented in Ethiopia and South Sudan.

40. Because anaemia remained a serious risk among refugee children and women across Africa, with far-reaching consequences for child development and learning, general health status and vitality, United Nations agencies and partners implemented anaemia reduction projects in a number of countries. Efforts were made to improve infant and young child feeding practices and to reduce non-dietary causes of anaemia, such as malaria. Deworming and improved sanitary conditions have resulted in significant decreases in some places. In refugee camps in Chad, children from 6 months to 2 years of age received a lipid-based nutrient supplement. Since its introduction, and despite drastic reductions in food assistance, anaemia levels have been overall on the decline.

41. Non-communicable diseases have become an increasing public health problem among refugees, with significant implications for the health care services provided. Non-communicable diseases are largely addressed at the secondary or tertiary (specialist) care level and require expensive treatments. During the reporting period, countries were supported with the development of clinical protocols and training to manage non-communicable diseases at the primary health care level. Partners organized programmes, including capacity-building in Burkina Faso and Kenya. In 2014 and in the first half of 2015, screening for pre-cancerous lesions of the cervix was scaled up in 10 countries in Africa, and refugee camps in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, the Niger, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania were provided with the capacity to offer screening and treatment services for the condition.

### HIV and AIDS

42. As at the end of 2014, 25.8 million of the 36.9 million people in the world living with HIV were from sub-Saharan Africa. The region also accounts for almost

70 per cent of global new HIV infections. A recent Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) report[4] indicated that some 1.3 million persons living with HIV may have been affected by humanitarian emergencies in sub-Saharan Africa, and only a very small proportion of them are likely to have had access to life-saving HIV treatment services, which are critical in the aftermath of an emergency.

43. In 2014, United Nations agencies and partners published a set of guidelines for the delivery of antiretroviral therapy for migrants and crisis-affected persons in sub-Saharan Africa. Those updated guidelines specifically included the forcibly displaced, and stressed that displacement must not be used as a basis to deny treatment.

## B. Security and access

44. Attacks and threats against humanitarian workers continued, particularly in East Africa and the Horn of Africa, Central Africa and the Great Lakes region. In Somalia alone, there were 75 incidents against aid workers, including 10 deaths and 22 abductions or arrests of humanitarian staff in 2014. During the first quarter of 2015, more than 30 incidents led to the death of 7, the injury of 11 and the arrest or detention of 20 humanitarian staff. Humanitarian access was deliberately restricted, including through the use of road blocks and checkpoints by non-State armed groups and militias in southern and central Somalia. Administrative restrictions, such as the arbitrary taxation of United Nations and other humanitarian organizations by local administrations, also continued.

45. In the Sudan, parties to the conflict continued to deny or restrict access to much of Darfur's East Jebel Marra, as well as to areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. Elsewhere, humanitarian access was impeded or delayed, affecting the movement of international personnel and hindering protection activities. Humanitarian access in South Sudan continued to be constrained owing to insecurity and violence targeting humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets, as well as by Government restrictions on river transport and the denial of flight safety assurances and airport clearances. Other common impediments included fees and taxes, extortion at checkpoints and interference in programme implementation.

46. In the Sahel region, insecurity and the presence of armed groups constrained humanitarian access in many areas. Landmines and unexploded ordnance were a major concern in Nigeria and will be an obstacle to return. In the Diffa, Tahoua and Tillabery regions in the Niger, and in Agadez farther north, United Nations agencies had to rely on military escorts. In Mali, an alarming increase in security incidents significantly impeded the implementation of projects and the delivery of aid, as humanitarian organizations regularly had to suspend their activities and relocate staff.

[4] See UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, "HIV in emergency contexts". Available from www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2015/20150612_UNAIDS_PCB36_15-13.

# V. Solutions

### Voluntary repatriation

47. The voluntary repatriation of refugees was at its lowest level since the 1980s. While the number of returnees globally fell from 414,000 in 2013 to 126,000 in 2014, the number also dropped in Africa, from 168,000 to 97,000. Insecurity in countries of origin and an absence of socioeconomic support in areas of return contributed significantly to the low rate of repatriation. The lack of political will to resolve the root causes of displacement also continued to be an important factor.

48. The countries in Africa with the largest number of returns in 2014 were: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (25,200); Mali (21,000); Angola (14,300); the Sudan (13,100); Côte d'Ivoire (12,400); and Rwanda (5,800). Including those who returned to the Democratic Republic of the Congo from the Central African Republic and the Congo, the total number of returnees since the repatriation operation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo began in 2012 was more than 120,000. Thousands also returned from Uganda.

49. The planned repatriation of Malian refugees was affected by renewed clashes in 2014 between Government forces and armed groups. Nevertheless, as at January 2015, some returns took place from Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger. Most returned to the south of Mali, in some cases electing to settle in areas other than their regions of origin rather than remain in exile.

50. The outbreak of Ebola in West Africa resulted in the closure of the border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire in August 2014 and, consequently, the suspension of the repatriation of Ivorians for the remainder of the year. In March 2015, UNHCR and the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire agreed that they would resume the voluntary repatriation programme, which included health control procedures. As at the time of reporting, the repatriation programme had not yet resumed.

51. A pilot project to support the spontaneous repatriation of Somali refugees from Kenya was launched in December 2014 under the auspices of a tripartite agreement between the Governments of Kenya and Somalia and UNHCR.

### Local integration

52. While local integration opportunities have been made available to refugees and former refugees in countries of first asylum, including Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, the number of refugees for whom that solution is offered remains limited.

53. Following a 2011 decision by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to provide citizenship to some 200,000 former refugees from Burundi who arrived in 1972, the local integration process found renewed impetus in September 2014, with some 149,000 citizenship certificates having been distributed by the end of May 2015. The Government is currently developing a multi-partner, multi-year local integration strategy as a framework for engaging national and international partners in the development of settlements, which will be critical for the successful integration of the newly naturalized citizens.

54. Plans were under way in Zambia to facilitate the integration of 10,000 former Angolan refugees and approximately 4,000 former Rwandan refugees in a manner that promotes their legal status, socioeconomic empowerment and self-reliance through the issuance of long-term residence permits, country of origin identity documents and passports. In support of solidarity and social cohesion, the provision of land and basic services will also include Zambian host communities.

**Resettlement**

55. In 2014, UNHCR submitted approximately 34,800 refugees for resettlement, the majority from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (18,800) and Somalia (9,400). That represents a 19 per cent increase in submissions compared with 2013 and a 52 per cent increase since 2012. More than 19,000 African refugees departed for resettlement from Somalia (12,000) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (7,000).

**Regional initiatives and comprehensive approaches**

56. At a ministerial meeting on the Global Initiative on Somali Refugees held in Addis Ababa in August 2014, the Governments of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda and Yemen, along with the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, UNHCR, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the Economic Commission for Africa, adopted the Addis Ababa Commitment towards Somali Refugees. The countries and organizations committed themselves to assuring continued asylum for Somali refugees in host countries, while working to support the creation of conditions that will make safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation both feasible and sustainable.

57. In 2014, decisive steps were taken to conclude the situation for Angolan refugees after 50 years of exile. More than 14,000 former Angolan refugees were repatriated, mostly from the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia. The Government of Angola supported the local integration of its citizens abroad by deploying interministerial teams to the host countries and issuing some 1,000 national passports. Host Governments issued residence permits enabling Angolans to remain even after the cessation of their refugee status. Progress in Zambia to provide residence permits is ongoing despite some administrative delays. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, some 18,000 residence permits were issued to facilitate local integration, and some 37,000 former Angolan refugees were planned to be repatriated in 2015.

58. The implementation of comprehensive solutions for Rwandan refugees continued. In 2014, 5,800 Rwandans voluntarily returned home, bringing the total number of returns between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2014 to 199,600. Verification exercises for Rwandan refugees took place in 2014, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where biometric registration is ongoing. Pending the results of that exercise, the number of Rwandan refugees stands at 80,000. Enhanced efforts are needed regarding the issuance of national passports and residence permits for Rwandan refugees who wish to integrate locally. A ministerial-level meeting is planned in 2015 to assess the progress made and determine the way forward on the comprehensive solutions strategy.

**Self-reliance and livelihood opportunities**

59. United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and donor partners increased activities aimed at building the self-reliance of refugees through livelihood opportunities. Enhanced self-reliance has been seen to not only reduce aid dependency but also to contribute to local economies and better prepare refugees for solutions, whatever those solutions may be and whenever opportunities arise. Livelihood opportunities are also vital for protection, as they reduce the risks of economic and sexual exploitation and child labour.

60. A key objective of livelihood programming is to promote the right to work. Many refugees do not have access to safe and legal employment, and even in countries where refugees have a right to work, it remains difficult for them to access employment in practice. Refugees may face discrimination in the labour market or may lack skills needed in the country of asylum. To address that situation, United Nations agencies provided targeted education and vocational training and access to loan schemes. In several countries in Africa, including Burkina Faso and Zambia, the "graduation model" was implemented. Developed by UNHCR, the Trickle Up programme and the BRAC Development Institute, it aims to "graduate" or support people in rural or urban areas to move out of poverty through interventions that include grants, capacity-building and microfinance.

61. The Government of Uganda has made great strides towards sustainable solutions for refugees. Allowing refugees the right to work and freedom of movement, the Government has also paved the way for development actors to address the needs of all those present within its territory, including refugees. In particular, it has ensured that refugees are included in the economic development of nine refugee-hosting districts as well as in the national development plan for 2016-2020. Meanwhile, WFP and UNHCR and partners began implementing joint livelihood programmes to increase self-reliance, focusing on farming as well as other income-generating activities.

62. In the Sudan, the United Nations continued to support sustainable return, reintegration and recovery, including by addressing community security needs. Initiatives were launched in Darfur and in the states that adjoin South Sudan to support livelihoods for displaced and vulnerable populations through tools such as microfinance and by establishing economic enterprises within host communities to regenerate local economies.

63. In the eastern area of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the "3x6 Approach"[5] of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was piloted in four communities with the aim of creating a conducive environment for reintegration by improving livelihood opportunities and supporting social cohesion. In 2014, a total of 420 men and women benefited from temporary employment opportunities. The pilot included awareness-raising sessions on conflict mitigation, non-violent communication and intercommunity dialogue. Approximately 105,100 people gained improved access to basic social services as a result of that approach. The 3x6 Approach also supported the socioeconomic reintegration of

[5] The 3x6 Approach provides a starting point for sustainable development following conflict. It includes three organizing principles (inclusiveness, ownership and sustainability) and six discrete steps (enrolment, rapid income generation, savings, joint-venturing, investing and expanding markets).

people affected by the conflict in Burundi, where temporary labour-intensive jobs benefited 4,650 returnees who subsequently were able to start economic activities with accumulated savings. A total of 17 markets were built and 42 rural roads rehabilitated in 2014.

**Solutions initiatives**

64. At the country level, the Solutions Alliance[6] supported the establishment of national groups, two of which are based in Africa in Somalia and Zambia. Following an event on solutions in Copenhagen during the High-level Partnership Forum on Somalia in November 2014 and a technical workshop to define a results plan linked to national development planning, a national Somalia Group was launched in Nairobi in March 2015. The Group will build on the framework of the Global Initiative on Somali Refugees of UNHCR and the work of the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat, a coalition of non-governmental organizations promoting durable solutions for Somali internally displaced persons and refugees. In Zambia, the Solutions Alliance National Advisory Group is co-chaired by the Government and includes a wide range of stakeholders. Together, they have developed a common vision on solutions and are working to support local integration efforts.

65. Following the selection of Côte d'Ivoire as a pilot country for the implementation of the Secretary-General's Policy Committee decision on durable solutions taken in 2011, a durable solutions committee finalized a strategy that had been prepared with the support of UNDP and UNHCR, in collaboration with the Government's Ministry of Planning and Development. The strategy includes responses targeted to the needs of returnees, former internally displaced persons, stateless people and host communities, and was informed by profiling conducted by the Nationa! Statistical Institute and the Joint IDP Profiling Service. Once validated by the Steering Committee of the United Nations Development Action Framework, the strategy will be mainstreamed into United Nations support for the national development plan for 2016-2020.

66. UNHCR and the International Trade Centre (ITC) signed a memorandum of understanding in January 2015 with the aim of expanding the inclusion of refugees in trade for development projects. Since then, ITC has been planning refugee-oriented projects with partners in sub-Saharan Africa and has joined the Solutions Alliance's thematic group on engaging the private sector.

## VI. Coordination and partnerships

67. The refugee coordination model[7] guides UNHCR coordination for refugee situations. As part of the overall humanitarian response, regional refugee coordinators for the Burundi, Central African Republic, Nigeria and South Sudan refugee situations, as well as for the Great Lakes, led operational planning and

[6] Launched in 2014, the Solutions Alliance is a network of diverse actors representing affected and host States, local authorities, development and humanitarian agencies, international financial institutions, donors, civil society and private sector actors, academics and others. It seeks to promote and enable the transition for displaced people towards increased self-reliance, resilience and sustainable development. See www.solutionsalliance.org.

[7] Available from www.unhcr.org/53679e2c9.html.

resource mobilization and developed regional refugee response plans, which provided a common platform for planning, delivery and fundraising for partners in the refugee response. Overall, four regional refugee response plans were launched for Africa, covering 12 refugee host country operations and bringing together more than 70 partners.

68. An inter-agency mission to Cameroon by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, IOM, UNHCR and the United Nations Children's Fund, as well as an Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs-UNHCR joint mission to Chad, took place to ensure that coordination arrangements were streamlined and optimized in line with the joint UNHCR-Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs note on mixed situations regarding coordination in practice.[8]

69. Between July 2014 and June 2015, the inter-agency Protection Standby Capacity Project, hosted by Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, facilitated the deployment of five Senior Protection Officers to support United Nations efforts in Africa, including bolstering child protection in the Central African Republic.

70. During the reporting period, the Emergency Relief Coordinator allocated $259.7 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund to support life-saving humanitarian activities in 29 African countries. Nearly 60 per cent, or $153.6 million, went to 18 countries with significant numbers of internally displaced persons or refugees. Allocations to displacement-related crises included $128.6 million for new or rapidly deteriorating crises through the Central Emergency Response Fund's rapid response window and $25 million for critically underfunded crises through the underfunded emergency window. Between January 2014 and June 2015, South Sudan received the highest amount ($59 million for internally displaced persons and refugees), followed by Ethiopia ($21 million for South Sudanese refugees). Some 24 per cent of the funding for displacement-related crises was allocated for food assistance ($36.7 million), nearly 14 per cent for activities related to the protection of civilians in armed conflict ($21.1 million), and 11 per cent for multisector refugee assistance ($16.9 million).

71. Between 2014 and the second half of 2015, country-based pooled funds allocated $421 million to support life-saving humanitarian activities in six sub-Saharan countries: the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan. Of that total, roughly $222 million, or 53 per cent, was allocated for projects addressing humanitarian needs caused by displacement.

72. The IKEA Foundation, among others, is providing multi-year funding for refugee operations in Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. It is the most significant and ambitious financial commitment to a single operation by a private sector partner. In the initial phase from 2012 through 2014, the Foundation's funding provided 46 million euros in life-saving assistance to Somali refugees in key sectors, and a livelihoods programme was established that included small business grants and vocational training. During the period from 2015 to 2017, the Foundation will support efforts to reduce aid dependency and increase self-reliance, responding to the needs of both refugees and the host community.

[8] Available from www.unhcr.org/pages/538dd3da6.html.

# VII. Conclusion and recommendations

73. Violence and conflict in sub-Saharan Africa resulted in high levels of new forced displacement for a fifth consecutive year. Increased needs due to both new and continuing crises have stretched the response capacity of Governments and humanitarian agencies to their limits. During the reporting period, emergency response and critical life-saving activities remained a priority, while operational approaches were adapted and expanded to meet the most pressing needs of refugees and internally displaced persons. Despite constraints that included underfunding and insecurity, the coordinated development and implementation of response strategies helped to ensure that humanitarian operations were complementary and mutually reinforcing.

74. Owing largely to conflict, meaningful and effective solutions have been elusive for the majority of the displaced. Uprooted people remained vulnerable to significant protection risks, including sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking, forced recruitment and other forms of exploitation. While host countries have upheld the long-standing tradition of solidarity that underpins the African Union's strong legal framework for protection, more remains to be done to ensure that national laws and systems deliver effective protection for all persons of concern. Against that backdrop:

(a) I call upon all States to amplify their efforts to foster peace and security in Africa, with a view to preventing conflict and alleviating human suffering. Human rights violations must end, and protection risks, including sexual and gender-based violence, forced recruitment, extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrests and detention must cease;

(b) I recall the fundamental obligation of States to respect the principle of asylum, including non-refoulement, and to maintain open borders for those fleeing conflict and persecution. I call upon the international community to support African countries in meeting the challenges and root causes associated with mixed movements, as well as trafficking and smuggling;

(c) All States and non-State actors must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access to people in need, including refugees and internally displaced persons, and must respect and protect humanitarian personnel, supplies and facilities, consistent with international humanitarian law. I encourage all African States to sign, ratify and fully implement the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel;

(d) African Union member States that have not yet signed or ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) are urged to do so. States that have ratified the Kampala Convention are encouraged to incorporate it into their domestic law in order to ensure its implementation;

(e) To reach the ambitious but achievable goal of ending statelessness in 10 years, States are encouraged to develop and implement national action plans to address statelessness, including through law reform, accession to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954 and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961, the removal of gender discrimination from nationality laws and strengthened birth and civil registration. African Union member

States are further urged to support the efforts of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to develop a protocol on the right to nationality in Africa and ensure its prompt adoption;

(f) I urge the international community to ensure robust funding and an assured pipeline for critical food and nutrition needs, particularly in emergencies, and to expand livelihood activities to address the food security and nutritional status of refugees and internally displaced persons in sub-Saharan Africa;

(g) To secure the goal of ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030, African States are encouraged to give greater prominence to refugees and internally displaced persons in their national HIV strategic plans to ensure that conflict and forced displacement do not leave even greater numbers of people beyond the effective reach of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services;

(h) I encourage States and humanitarian and development partners to bolster efforts to address protracted situations of displacement and to seek durable solutions, including from the beginning of a crisis. Multi-year strategies for solutions, with clear benchmarks, must be developed to ensure targeted and coordinated action. States are urged to integrate refugees and internally displaced persons into their national development plans and to provide access to livelihood opportunities and the labour market;

(i) States, humanitarian and development actors must ensure the meaningful participation of refugees and internally displaced persons in the programmes and activities that affect them directly, whether related to protection, assistance or solutions. Those populations must not be treated as beneficiaries of assistance, but rather as agents of their own futures.

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Item 131 (a) and (e) of the provisional agenda*
**Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors: United Nations and capital master plan**

# Implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors contained in its reports for the year ended 31 December 2014 on the United Nations and on the capital master plan

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The present report provides information in response to the recommendations of the Board of Auditors as contained in its reports for the year ended 31 December 2014 on the United Nations (A/70/5 (Vol. I), chap. II) and on the capital master plan (A/70/5 (Vol. V)). The report is submitted in accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 48/216 B, in which the Secretary-General was requested to report to the Assembly at the same time as the Board of Auditors submitted its recommendations to the Assembly on measures taken or to be taken to implement those recommendations.

The Administration has accepted all of the Board's recommendations. The present report provides the Administration's comments as well as information on the status of implementation, the department responsible, the estimated completion date and the priority of each recommendation contained in the reports of the Board. In addition, the present report contains updated information on the status of implementation of the recommendations of the Board for prior periods that were reported by the Board as not having been fully implemented in the annexes to its reports.

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# I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 48/216 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it on the measures that would be taken to implement the recommendations of the Board of Auditors at the same time as the reports of the Board were submitted to the Assembly. Accordingly, the present report is submitted in response to the recommendations of the Board contained in its reports for the year ended 31 December 2014 on the United Nations (A/70/5 (Vol. I), chap. II) and on the capital master plan (A/70/5 (Vol. V)).

2. In the preparation of the present report, account was taken of the provisions of the following documents:

(a) Resolution 48/216 B, in particular its paragraph 8, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to draw attention in his reports to the recommendations of the Board that would require action by the Assembly;

(b) Resolution 52/212 B, in particular its paragraphs 3-5, and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the proposals of the Board for improving the implementation of its recommendations approved by the Assembly (A/52/753, annex);

(c) Resolution 69/249 A, in particular its paragraph 17, in which the Assembly reiterated its request to the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the funds and programmes of the United Nations to ensure full implementation of the recommendations of the Board and the related recommendations of the Advisory Committee in a prompt and timely manner, to continue to hold programme managers accountable for the non-implementation of recommendations and to effectively address the root causes of the problems highlighted by the Board; its paragraph 18, in which the Assembly reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to provide in his reports on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board a full explanation for the delays in the implementation of the recommendations of the Board, in particular those recommendations not yet fully implemented that were two or more years old; and its paragraph 19, in which the Assembly also reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to indicate in future reports an expected time frame for the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, as well as the priorities for their implementation and the office holders to be held accountable.

3. With regard to prioritization, it is noted that the Board categorizes the most important recommendations as "main" recommendations. While all accepted recommendations of the Board will be implemented in a timely manner, the main recommendations will be considered to be of high priority.

4. The Administration has concurred with most of the Board's recommendations, and comments are provided on all recommendations for the year ended 31 December 2014. In accordance with paragraph 18 of resolution 69/249 A, additional information has been provided on all recommendations for prior financial periods that the Board considered not to have been fully implemented.

5. In accordance with the above-mentioned resolutions, section II of the present report contains the information requested by the General Assembly on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the reports of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations. Section II.A provides information on the

implementation of the recommendations contained in the Board's report for the year ended 31 December 2014, and section II.B provides information on the implementation of recommendations contained in the Board's reports for prior financial periods that the Board considered not to have been fully implemented.

6. Section III of the present report contains the information requested by the General Assembly on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the reports of the Board of Auditors on the capital master plan. Section III.A provides information on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board's report for the year ended 31 December 2014, and section III.B provides information on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Board's reports for prior financial periods that the Board considered not to have been fully implemented.

# II. United Nations

## A. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations for the year ended 31 December 2014

### Overview

7. Set out below is the information requested by the General Assembly on the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations for the year ended 31 December 2014 (A/70/5 (Vol. I), chap. II).

8. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the status of implementation of recommendations as of August 2015.

Table 1
**Status of implementation of main recommendations**

| *Department responsible* | *Number of recommendations* | *Implemented* | *In progress* | *Target date set* | *No target date* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Department of Management | 8 | – | 8 | 6 | 2 |
| Department of Political Affairs | 1 | – | 1 | 1 | – |
| Multiple departments | 1 | – | 1 | – | 1 |
| **Total** | **10** | **–** | **10** | **7** | **3** |
| **Percentage** | **100** | **–** | **100** | | |

9. Table 1 summarizes the status of the 10 main recommendations of the Board, all of which are in progress. Of the 10 main recommendations, 4 (40 per cent) are scheduled to be implemented in 2016 and 3 (30 per cent) in 2017, and 3 (30 per cent) are of an ongoing nature.

10. Table 2 summarizes the status of all 26 recommendations of the Board, all of which are in progress. Of the 26 recommendations, 16 (62 per cent) are scheduled to be implemented in 2016 and 4 (15 per cent) in 2017, and 6 (23 per cent) are of an ongoing nature.

Table 2
**Status of implementation of all recommendations**

| *Department responsible* | *Number of recommendations* | *Implemented* | *In progress* | *Target date set* | *No target date* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Department of Management | 21 | – | 21 | 17 | 4 |
| Department of Political Affairs | 1 | – | 1 | 1 | – |
| Multiple departments | 4 | – | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| **Total** | **26** | **–** | **26** | **20** | **6** |
| **Percentage** | **100** | **–** | **100** | | |

**Detailed information on implementation status**

11. **In paragraph 21 of its report, to improve account preparation procedures in 2015, the Board recommended that the Secretariat: (a) prepare a detailed and achievable timetable for preparing its 2015 financial statements, taking into account the lessons learned from the 2014 exercise and the timeline for implementing Umoja; (b) ensure that sufficient finance staff with the required skills were available to complete the key accounting tasks required in the time available; (c) integrate key Umoja activities, such as data cleansing and conversion, training and user support activities, into the planning and timetable for preparing the accounts to ensure that the activities were aligned; and (d) perform effective management review of the draft financial statements before their submission to the Board.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: High

*Target date*: First quarter of 2016

12. The Administration will prepare a detailed timetable for preparing its 2015 financial statements and incorporate all the recommended items.

13. **In paragraph 28 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration transform the finance function into a more strategic value-adding service and that it support that transformation with a wider financial management training programme to enhance financial literacy and management across the Organization.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: High

*Target date*: Fourth quarter of 2017

14. The Administration's comments are reflected in paragraph 29 of the Board's report.

15. In addition, some actions have already been implemented, including an online course on budget and finance in the United Nations, which is available in Inspira to all staff to enhance their financial literacy.

16. **In paragraph 40 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration: (a) develop standard approaches and methodologies for measuring the costs of providing services to internal and external users; and (b) identify how Umoja could support more transparent recording, analysis and reporting of the full costs of activities.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: High

*Target date*: Fourth quarter of 2016

17. In preparation for the roll-out of Umoja, the Administration has issued new policy guidance and instructions on the changes that will take place and improvements that are expected as a result of the new functionalities of Umoja. Among other things, the Administration has implemented an initial phase of standardizing a service catalogue across all duty stations with common activity types and rate structures. In addition, the accounting arrangements for cost recovery activities have been streamlined to provide greater visibility with respect to the costs of services and comparison across service centres. The standardization efforts will be intensified with the full deployment of Umoja, taking into consideration the budget cycles, with more detailed cost centres, common service catalogues and standardized cost elements, among other things. These will enable the Administration to take a holistic view of the costs of providing services to internal and external entities and to better identify opportunities for efficiencies and cost reductions.

18. **In paragraph 55 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration develop the tools, capacity and capability to generate comprehensive and detailed information that could be used to better understand, manage and control staff costs and to provide more accurate, timely and complete management information to support decision-making.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: Medium

*Target date*: Fourth quarter of 2016

19. In terms of budgeting, it should be noted that standard costs are developed for the calculation of staff costs that are based on the review of actual payroll costs incurred in the current biennium, by category and level, at each duty station. Similarly, common staff costs are based on the analysis of actual common staff costs

for all duty stations for the prior and current bienniums. Such adjustments are approved by the General Assembly. The Administration will continue to develop management accounting reports as recommended by the Board.

20. **In paragraph 60 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration examine the underlying causes of the differences in average claim costs to determine whether there was scope to reduce the costs of administering the schemes.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: Medium

*Target date*: Ongoing

21. The Administration's comments are reflected in paragraph 61 of the Board's report.

22. **In paragraph 64 of its report, the Board recommended that arrangements be made to conduct an open-book audit of the third-party administrators to provide assurance over the accuracy of reported costs and activities performed by its agents and to confirm that they have complied with their contractual obligations. The inspection rights under these contacts should be exercised regularly in future.**

23. The Administration is in the process of preparing the request for proposal aimed at selecting an audit firm to conduct the inspections.

24. **In paragraph 74 of its report, to address the shortcomings identified, the Board reiterated its previous recommendation and encouraged the Secretariat to expedite work on developing workforce planning as a matter of urgency.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: Medium

*Target date*: Fourth quarter of 2017

25. The Administration's comments are reflected in paragraph 75 of the Board's report.

26. **In paragraph 80 of its report, the Board recommended that the Secretariat: (a) develop an appropriate mechanism to ensure that budget and human resources functions currently handled in silos by the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts were better coordinated to improve strategic human resources planning; (b) review job profiles to ensure that each post was categorized within an appropriate job family and network using a common standard classification system; and (c) consider the scope for developing a workforce planning module in the scope of Umoja.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: High

*Target date*: Fourth quarter of 2017

27. While it should be noted that the Office of Human Resources Management is involved in the budget process, for example, in the context of any proposed post changes, departments are required to seek the Office's advice on the proper classification of such functions and to include the related forms for classification. The Administration agrees that the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts and the Office of Human Resources Management have to work together to establish an end-to-end integrated process to ensure that the posts authorized in the budget and the posts in the staffing tables are linked and consistent, in terms of type and nature of post, source of funding, duration, functions, level, location, and so forth. In establishing such a process, it is important to note that all posts, whether they are newly established or extended, should be classified before the budget is approved. The budget and classification information regarding a post should be centrally recorded and used to provide a consistent picture of the post. This will enhance the human resources planning capacity of the Organization. In this respect, both Offices will participate in the design of the Umoja Extension 2 solution to articulate their requirements for the integrated process. This will also require a review of the current policies and procedures pertaining to budget and human resources.

28. **In paragraph 83 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration review, update and rationalize the current delegations of authority.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: Medium

*Target date*: Second quarter of 2016

29. A new Secretary-General's Bulletin on the delegation of authority in the administration of the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules (ST/SGB/2015/1) was issued on 9 April 2015 and sets out the authorities to be retained by the Secretary-General. A draft administrative instruction is under preparation, which will provide tables setting out the delegation of authority for the Under-Secretary-General for Management, the Office of Human Resources Management, offices away from Headquarters, regional commissions, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support and the heads of all other departments and offices.

30. **In paragraph 84 of its report, the Board also recommended that the Administration produce a consolidated policy document that clearly set out delegations of authority and that the Office of Human Resources Management establish an assurance and oversight framework to monitor the exercise of**

**delegated powers and ensure that they were exercised in conformity with the approved policy.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: Medium

*Target date*: Second quarter of 2016

31. Refer to the Administration's comments above with respect to the recommendation contained in paragraph 83 of the Board's report.

32. **In paragraph 92 of its report, the Board recommended that the Office of Human Resources Management monitor the implementation of the Secretary-General's Bulletin on employment and accessibility for staff members with disabilities in the United Nations Secretariat (ST/SGB/2014/3).**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: Medium

*Target date*: First quarter of 2016

33. The Administration is developing an administrative instruction that will provide further guidance on the implementation of the Secretary-General's Bulletin on employment and accessibility for staff members with disabilities in the United Nations Secretariat.

34. **In paragraph 93 of its report, the Board also recommended that the Administration address gaps in access to data on sick leave for comprehensive and timely reporting and develop capability to gather information on key health-care parameters covering all its clients across the United Nations system for more comprehensive reporting on status and policy issues.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: Medium

*Target date*: Second quarter of 2016

35. The Administration accepted this recommendation, noting that activities in that regard were underway. Umoja will deliver increased ability to access data on sick leave, and the Medical Services Division has commenced dialogue with the health insurers to obtain health-care utilization reporting.

36. **In paragraph 98 of its report, the Board recommended that the Office of Human Resources Management: (a) consider capturing information on the spans of control of first and second reporting officers with a view to identifying**

**cases where such spans were unacceptably large compared with office norms; (b) consider the use of enhanced data analytics for additional dashboard reports that would facilitate analysis of individual performance grading of individual employees; and (c) consider enhancing system applications to aggregate information on individual development plans and training activities to be undertaken.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Second quarter of 2016 |

37. The Administration's comments are reflected in paragraph 99 of the Board's report.

38. **In paragraph 104 of its report, the Board recommended that the Office of Human Resources Management expedite the progress and resolution of disciplinary cases and develop a centralized monitoring system to track the number of ongoing investigations of alleged misconduct from the stage when a complaint is formally lodged or recommended by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Ongoing |

39. The Office of Human Resources Management continues to make every effort to expedite the process in cases referred for disciplinary action. The Office does not have the required resources to keep track of all investigations in the Organization at this time.

40. **In paragraph 122 of its report, the Board recommended that the Secretariat: (a) develop detailed enterprise risk management policies and procedures for staff to follow at departmental levels of the Organization to supplement the guidance in place for managing the critical enterprise risks; (b) develop a detailed implementation plan for all elements of enterprise risk management that set out a clear timetable, milestones, deliverables and resources required; (c) increase the level of communication and training provided to staff on enterprise risk management policies and procedures; (d) consider the acquisition of appropriate tools, including software, to support the implementation of enterprise risk management; and (e) introduce regular progress reports to inform the Senior Management Committee of the status of implementation of enterprise risk management throughout the Organization and to provide assurance that risks were being managed and mitigated effectively.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: High

*Target date*: Ongoing

41. In November 2012, the Management Committee approved the implementation of a Secretariat-wide enterprise risk assessment to identify, evaluate and prioritize the top strategic risks for the Organization and related managerial responses. Since then, the Secretariat has been actively implementing this assessment, as detailed below.

42. A Secretariat-wide risk assessment exercise has been conducted, and its results were validated by the Management Committee, acting as the enterprise risk management committee of the Organization, at its meetings held on 21 May and 27 June 2014. At those meetings, the Management Committee came to a common understanding of risks and their criticality, identifying the six critical risks on which immediate action was needed and the managers (corporate risk owners) responsible for the definition of risk treatment and response plans.

43. Under the guidance of the corporate risk owners, all of the risk treatment working groups worked to refine the identification of relevant risk drivers, existing controls and response strategies and, most important, the definition of detailed risk treatment plans in order to identify specific risk treatment actions, due dates, responsible teams and, where relevant, resource implications. The risk treatment plans were endorsed by the Management Committee, acting as the enterprise risk management committee, on 25 July 2015.

44. The objectives remain that the Secretariat-wide risk universe, as defined by the enterprise risk management policy and methodology, be tailored to reflect the profile of each organizational unit under consideration and that each department and office develop its own risk catalogue as a subset of the Secretariat-wide risk universe. Eventually, all risks identified within the Organization, at each organizational or functional unit level, will be traced back to the entity-level risk universe identified for the Secretariat. This process will require substantial additional resources, given that it will imply both the creation of enterprise risk management structures within each office and the strengthening of the central enterprise risk management capacity, which will provide proper guidance, tools, training and coordination and will be able to monitor and report consolidated results at the highest level of the Organization. Meanwhile, the Secretariat is focusing its efforts on embedding the management of the risks agreed upon by the Secretary-General and the Management Committee and to implement the action plan approved by the Committee.

45. **In paragraph 128 of its report, the Board reiterated its previous recommendations on fraud and strongly encouraged management to take concerted and urgent action to strengthen its counter-fraud policies and procedures.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: High

*Target date*: Fourth quarter of 2017

46. In June 2015, the Secretariat put together a working group under the leadership of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management to take stock of all the recommendations raised by the Board on the issue of fraud, including the development of an anti-fraud policy. The following departments and offices are duly represented in the working group:

(a) Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts;

(b) Office of Human Resources Management;

(c) Office of Internal Oversight Services;

(d) Office of Legal Affairs;

(e) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs;

(f) Department of Field Support;

(g) Ethics Office;

(h) United Nations Office at Geneva.

47. The Administration fully recognizes the importance of a mature and integrated Organization-wide approach to tackling fraud through the development and maintenance of sound anti-fraud policies and strategies. This includes undertaking a comprehensive fraud risk assessment, developing and rationalizing the existing suite of policies and guidance materials, and developing and implementing proper procedures, on the basis of best practice.

48. **In paragraph 136 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration review the United Nations Procurement Manual and associated guidance material to clarify the circumstances in which delegated authority could be exercised and to indicate the criteria to be applied to determine when issues should be referred to a higher body.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: High

*Target date*: First quarter of 2016

49. The Administration considers that both the administrative instruction on the review committees on contracts (ST/AI/2011/8) and chapter 12 of the United Nations Procurement Manual provide sufficient clarity on the delegation of authority. However, the Administration takes note of the Board's observations on the two cases examined and agrees to review the Manual's guidance on contract amendments or modifications. If it is deemed necessary, the Administration will also

assess whether clarity or guidance is required either by amending the Manual or by issuing a separate instruction.

50. **In paragraph 138 of its report, the Board recommended: (a) that procedures be stipulated to ensure greater coordination between the Department of Field Support and the Procurement Division in chartering aircraft so as to obviate the possibilities of engaging aircraft in excess of requirements or those that did not conform to technical specifications; (b) that the process of technical evaluation of proposals be strengthened; (c) that such procedures include an effective post-contract technical confirmation of the technical compliance of the aircraft provided by the vendor with the specifications stipulated in the bid documents; and (d) that an accountability mechanism be put in place to ensure that contract actions were initiated only after adequate planning with reference to mandate, strategy and technical specifications.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Departments responsible*: | Department of Management/Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Ongoing |

51. The Administration wishes to clarify that, in an e-mail dated 18 February 2014, the Department of Field Support requested the Procurement Division, under its delegated authority, to extend the contract for a period sufficient to complete the procurement process for a replacement contract. Furthermore, in a fax dated 24 February 2014, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) clearly clarified that, in identifying the helicopters for reduction, only the cost factor had been taken into account and not serviceability. Given the initial price of the contract, the maximum period for an extension allowable under the Division's authority would not have provided sufficient time to conclude the procurement process and a replacement contract. This was communicated by the Division to the Department by e-mail.

52. On 26 February 2014, the Department of Field Support sent a memorandum requesting an extension in receipt of only five helicopters. However, by that time the Procurement Division had managed to negotiate a lower price per helicopter for the six helicopters for the needed extension period of two months. Those helicopters were all utilized by UNAMID. The Administration believes that the Division acted in good faith and in the Organization's best interest in realizing cost savings through negotiations in order to meet the full operational requirements of UNAMID during the extension period.

53. The Administration also wishes to note that the subsequent replacement tender covered six helicopters, which indicated that the requirement in UNAMID was indeed for six helicopters and that the earlier request for five helicopters by the Department of Field Support had been made on the basis of budget restrictions in effect at the time. The Administration is of the view that the Procurement Division acted in good faith in trying to meet the full operational requirements of the mission without interruption.

54. The Administration wishes to clarify that the aircraft evaluated by the Department of Field Support was in compliance with the terms and conditions of the contract. At the time of arrival of the Saab 340B aircraft at the mission and upon initial inspection, it was determined that the internal configuration of the toilet was an impediment to the conduct of certain types of casualty and medical evacuation flights. The carrier was requested to move the toilet, which was at the back of the aircraft, to the front. The carrier decided that it would be easier for it to provide an alternative, identical aircraft whose toilet was located in the front than reconfigure aircraft locally. This issue was determined by the mission to be non-critical. In fact, during the period in question the aircraft flew 83.84 hours of regular and special passenger flights, including a casualty evacuation flight on 8 April 2014 in support of the Chadian contingent from Kidal to Gao, Mali, with two passengers on board, given that the aircraft still could perform certain levels of casualty and medical evacuation tasks despite the toilet configuration. Therefore, the Administration does not agree with the statement made by the Board in paragraph 137 (b) of its report that the aircraft did not meet technical operational requirements.

55. The Administration accepts this recommendation, but wishes to note that the matters raised by the Board are technical aviation issues relating to peacekeeping operations, which would be addressed more appropriately in Volume II of the Board's report.

56. **In paragraph 142 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration continue to enhance its procurement and contract management capability by continuing its efforts to develop a career path for procurement professionals, which should include further training and other avenues, for example, outward secondments, and the continued recruitment of procurement professionals.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Departments responsible*: | Department of Management/Department of Field Support |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Ongoing |

57. The Administration will explore possibilities for further professionalization of procurement staff. It is understood that this recommendation should be construed within the context of paragraphs 172 and 173 of the Board's report for the biennium ended 31 December 2013 (A/69/5 (Vol. I), chap. II).

58. In 2014, the Procurement Division rolled out phase two of its Procurement Training Campus, offering online access to comprehensive training courses on contractual issues in purchasing and contract management. These courses offer robust induction and training on addressing contract management.

59. Since the introduction of the contract management training module in August 2014 in the Department of Field Support, approximately 600 staff involved in contract management responsibilities at Headquarters and in missions have completed this online training course. With regard to the recruitment of procurement professionals, the Department intends to conduct a recruitment exercise, on the

basis of a generic job opening, in order to fill its roster for procurement functions at the P-3, P-4 and P-5 levels during the second half of 2015. The job descriptions for procurement functions require a minimum of five (recent) years of progressively responsible experience in procurement, contract management, administration or a related area. The descriptions also stipulate that a recognized qualification in procurement and contracting is desirable and considered an advantage.

60. **In paragraph 163 of its report, the Board recommended that, in order to enable stakeholders to assess performance more readily, the Administration revise the performance measurement and reporting framework to ensure that annual budget reports provided a clear comparison of actual and planned performance of missions.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Departments responsible*: | Department of Management/Department of Political Affairs/Department of Peacekeeping Operations/ Department of Field Support |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2016 |

61. The Administration is working on improving the reporting framework of the annual budgets to comply with the recommendation.

62. **In paragraph 169 of its report, the Board recommended that the Department of Political Affairs work with all involved entities to develop a target operating model for the provision of support to all special political missions that clearly defines roles and responsibilities, the resources required and how performance would be measured.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Political Affairs |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2016 |

63. The Department of Political Affairs will continue to work with other entities to find a suitable operating model for the provision of support to special political missions, with due consideration to the variety in terms of the size, mandates and complexity of operating environment of each mission. The outcome will be influenced by initiatives of the Administration that have an impact on field operations and budgetary considerations.

64. **In paragraph 178 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration strengthen its efforts to monitor and enforce compliance with the 16-day advance purchase rule by special political missions, including by developing a suite of management information reports that provided key information on the date of ticket purchase, the class of travel and the cost of flights.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Departments responsible*: | Department of Management/Department of Political Affairs/Department of Peacekeeping Operations/ Department of Field Support |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2016 |

65. Compliance with the 16-day advance purchase policy is monitored on a quarterly basis. Details regarding special political missions are reported through the Department of Field Support, along with peacekeeping missions. The Department issued a coded cable in June 2015 to all field missions reminding them of the need to adhere to the advance purchase policy. Following the planned introduction of the Umoja travel solution in special political missions by the second quarter of 2016, the advance purchase policy compliance report will be enhanced to include the requested key information on the date of ticket purchase, the class of travel and the cost of flights.

66. **In paragraph 184 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration develop a range of financial performance indicators for measuring and reporting travel costs and compliance with the 16-day advance purchase rule, which will promote greater cost consciousness and compliance with travel policies.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2016 |

67. Following the planned introduction of the Umoja travel solution in special political missions by the second quarter of 2016, the related business intelligence solution will allow for the development and regular reporting of key performance indicators relating to travel. Such reports will be made available to certifying officers in all departments and offices. In addition, internal benchmarking between departments and offices is envisioned to further promote awareness, identify best practices and increase overall compliance.

68. **In paragraph 192 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration include consideration of wider aspects of United Nations operations in subsequent phases of the global service delivery model, so as to ensure effective support to programmes.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Ongoing |

69. The development of the global service delivery model for the Secretariat will follow a phased approach, given the magnitude of the transformational changes associated with that initiative and the fact that its implementation will be based on decisions by Member States.

70. The following stages have been planned to date:

(a) The Secretary-General will propose a framework for the global service delivery model that will be presented at the seventieth session of the General Assembly, focusing on the vision and guiding principles, methodology, scope and delivery modalities for the model. A detailed proposal for the model, including business case, cost-benefit analysis and location options, will then be presented at the seventy-first session of the Assembly;

(b) The scope of the model will be administrative support services, including both transactional and expertise-based administrative functions. Programmatic activities of the Secretariat are not within the scope of the model. Its development for administrative support functions that span the Secretariat is a very complex undertaking. Trying to further enlarge the scope of the model poses the danger of delaying, and even derailing, its progress.

71. It should be noted that Member States affirmed this scope when they encouraged the Secretary-General to further explore the feasibility of a Secretariat-wide approach to common service delivery and requested him to submit for consideration by the Assembly any proposals that he might develop for a Secretariat-wide approach to common service delivery (see A/67/565, para. 75). In that context, common service delivery had been defined by the Secretariat as administrative, transactional, back-office tasks (see A/67/360, para. 54).

72. **In paragraph 197 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration establish a formal approach to managing and improving operations to enable continuous reform and improvements in departments.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | First quarter of 2016 |

73. The Board has been made aware of the work being undertaken in this area, including the discussions and reporting that have taken place in the weekly Executive Management Group meetings between the Under-Secretary-General for Management and his Assistant Secretaries-General, most of whom are deeply involved in or responsible for the initiatives in question.

74. As part of the enterprise risk management approach of the Secretariat, organizational transformation has been identified in the enterprise-wide risk profile. A draft risk treatment and response plan assesses five key transformational initiatives (Umoja, the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), the information and communications technology strategy, human resources reforms and the global service delivery model) and their interdependencies. It identifies key risk drivers and proposes mitigating measures at the enterprise level. These include

the need to define a common dashboard and action plan encompassing all the transformation initiatives to ensure proper integration, the alignment of key milestones and the recognition of synergies.

75. **In paragraph 199 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration urgently enhance its capability to coordinate ongoing transformation projects.**

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|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | First quarter of 2016 |

76. Refer to the Administration's comments above with respect to the recommendation contained in paragraph 196 of the Board's report.

## B. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the reports of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations for prior financial periods

### Overview

77. In paragraph 18 of its resolution 69/249 A, the General Assembly reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to provide in his reports on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors a full explanation for the delays in the implementation of the recommendations of the Board, in particular those recommendations not yet fully implemented that were two or more years old.

78. The overall status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the Board's reports for the three past bienniums, as of August 2014, is shown in table 3.

Table 3
**Overall status of implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors from prior periods as of August 2015**

| *Biennium report No.* | *Implemented* | *In progress* | *Closed by the Board overtaken by events* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2008-2009/(A/65/5 (Vol. I), chap. II) | 59 | 7 | 6 | 72 |
| 2010-2011/(A/67/5 (Vol. I), chap. II) | 23 | 6 | 11 | 40 |
| 2012-2013/(A/69/5 (Vol. I), chap. II) | 2 | 24 | 2 | 28 |
| **Total** | **84** | **37** | **19** | **140** |
| **Percentage** | **60** | **26** | **14** | **100** |

79. In annex I to its report on the United Nations for the year ended 31 December 2014 (A/70/5 (Vol. I), chap. II), the Board provided a summary of the status of implementation as of April 2015 of its 47 extant recommendations relating

to prior financial periods. Of the 47 extant recommendations, five (11 per cent) had been fully implemented, 37 (78 per cent) were in progress and the remaining five (11 per cent) had been overtaken by events and closed by the Board. Information is provided below on the 37 recommendations that were in progress and is set out in the order in which the recommendations are presented in annex I.

80. Table 4 summarizes the overall situation as of August 2015.

Table 4
**Status of implementation of extant recommendations from prior periods considered not fully implemented in annex I to the report of the Board of Auditors for the year ended 31 December 2014**

| *Department responsible* | *Number of recommendations* | *Implemented* | *In progress* | *Target date set* | *No target date* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Department of Management | 21 | 3 | 18 | 18 | – |
| Department for General Assembly and Conference Management | 1 | – | 1 | 1 | – |
| Executive Office of the Secretary-General | 1 | 1 | – | – | – |
| Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs | 3 | – | 3 | 3 | – |
| Office of Internal Oversight Services | 1 | – | 1 | 1 | – |
| Office of Legal Affairs | 1 | 1 | – | – | – |
| Multiple departments | 9 | – | 9 | 7 | 2 |
| **Total** | **37** | **5** | **32** | **30** | **2** |
| **Percentage** | **100** | **14** | **86** | | |

81. As indicated in table 4, of the 37 extant recommendations from prior periods that were considered not fully implemented by the Board, 5 (14 per cent) were subsequently implemented and 32 (86 per cent) were in progress as of August 2015. Of the 32 recommendations that were in progress, 10 (31 per cent) are scheduled to be implemented before the end of 2015, 8 (25 per cent) in 2016 and 12 (38 per cent) between 2017 and 2020, and 2 (6 per cent) are of an ongoing nature.

82. In paragraph 21 of the summary of its report on the United Nations for the year ended 31 December 2014 (A/70/5 (Vol. I), chap. II), the Board noted the commitment of the Administration to the implementation of its recommendations. It should also be noted that most of the recommendations that are not yet fully implemented and that are two or more years old relate to the implementation of multi-year transformational projects, such as Umoja.

**Detailed information on implementation status**

83. **In paragraph 29 of its report for the biennium ended 31 December 2013 (A/69/5 (Vol. I) and Corr.1, chap. II), the Board recommended that the Administration establish how and under what time frame it would be able to more closely link budget consumption with what had been delivered in terms of outputs and outcomes; and, with this aim in mind, set out a detailed plan for embedding results-based management as part of business as usual, defining clear responsibilities and resources.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: High

*Target date*: Second quarter of 2016

84. The current budget format provides results-based costing at the subprogramme level. In addition, for specific projects across the Secretariat, costing is often provided at a more detailed level. The level of costing, therefore, is adjusted to the specific needs of the decision-making process in question. The Secretary-General will provide an update on results-based management in his next report on accountability, in accordance with paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 69/272.

85. **In paragraph 36 of its report, the Board recommended that the Management Committee assess whether it had the tools and capabilities to support it in managing the organizational improvement programme, and that it devise a plan to address any gaps.**

*Department responsible*: Executive Office of the Secretary-General

*Status*: Implemented

*Priority*: Medium

*Target date*: Not applicable

86. The Management Committee has increased its focus on overseeing various strands of the transformative agenda, including through senior management engagement and leadership and direct technical support from lead departments and offices. The Committee therefore has the tools and capabilities to support the Secretary-General in managing the organizational improvement programme in the Secretariat.

87. The functions of the Management Committee as they relate to this recommendation are established in section 1 of the Secretary-General's Bulletin on the Management Committee (ST/SGB/2011/3 and Amend.1). In the performance of these and its other functions, the Committee is composed of members drawn from various areas of the Organization who, with the technical support of their staffs, bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the issues on its agendas. In addition, the membership of the Committee has been broadened and strengthened in recent years to ensure that senior management is informed and engaged in the business transformation process.

88. To ensure strategic guidance, oversight and coherence of management issues, the Management Committee also reviews key elements of major management-related reports of the Secretary-General that are to be submitted for the approval of the General Assembly, such as the budget outline. Through its Chair, the Committee also issues periodic memorandums to all senior managers, drawing their attention to critical management and accountability issues that may require individual and collective attention by management.

89. In 2014, as part of its efforts to improve oversight and effectiveness, the Management Committee strengthened its working methods to include greater accountability for the implementation of its decisions. The two key changes included the implementation of: (a) a standard methodology for presenting information on the subjects to be discussed, and (b) a standard methodology for tracking and following up on the implementation of the Committee's decisions.

90. **In paragraph 44 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration develop plans for the production of monthly management accounts and improved financial reports to management, drawing on the opportunities being provided by IPSAS and the new enterprise resource planning system.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2017 |

91. Monthly management accounts will be completed once Umoja has been fully deployed. In the meantime, the Administration has begun providing enhanced financial information to the Management Committee to improve the discussions and decision-making processes on financial matters.

92. **In paragraph 48 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration, as part of its work on enterprise risk management, develop a strategy to enhance the accountability and internal control framework, including the development of a "statement on internal control" or equivalent document. This replaced the Board's previous recommendation on internal control (see A/67/5 (Vol. I), chap. II, para. 171).**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2018 |

93. Enterprise risk management is currently in its implementation stage. Following the joint Programme Committee/Management Committee meeting held on 9 September 2014, the Secretary-General formally approved: (a) the Secretariat's risk register, (b) the implementation of relevant risk response strategies, and (c) the governance structure guiding the process.

94. A principal-level meeting of the corporate risk owners was held under the chairmanship of the Deputy Secretary-General on 24 October 2014 to formally start the implementation process and to ensure the continued coordination of the efforts of the working groups. Under the guidance of the corporate risk owners, all of the risk treatment working groups have worked to refine the identification of relevant risk drivers, existing controls and response strategies and, most important, the definition of detailed risk treatment plans to identify specific risk treatment actions,

due dates, responsible teams and, where relevant, resource implications. Once these actions have been concluded, the Administration will work on further developing the internal control framework of the Organization and on the implementation of the statement of internal control, for which a clear enterprise risk management framework must be in place.

95. **In paragraph 56 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration develop a deeper understanding of its cost base and therefore the capability to compare and benchmark its administrative overheads and the performance of its business functions to drive more cost-effective delivery. This might entail creating a general ledger of analysis codes for administrative and programme expenditure (and classifying each transaction according to the appropriate code).**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Second quarter of 2017 |

96. The planned full roll-out of Umoja, which has more robust cost accounting capabilities that the current systems, will provide the Organization with an opportunity to address many of the shortcomings of those systems. Budget formulation will be available as part of Umoja Extension 2.

97. **In paragraph 60 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration prepare annual updates on the trends in, and funding options for, end-of-service liabilities in order to keep the General Assembly fully informed of the longer-term funding requirements associated with the pay-as-you-go approach.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Third quarter of 2015 |

98. The trends in and funding options for end-of-service liabilities are included in the management discussions and analysis that accompany the audited financial statements of the United Nations for the year ended 31 December 2014 (see A/70/5 (Vol. I)).

99. **In paragraph 77 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration perform a review of the budget process and implement an improved end-to-end budget process, including the information and communications technology elements of Umoja Extension 2.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2019 |

100. The Administration is reviewing all elements relating to the Extension 2 solutions of Umoja. The Organization needs to gain a better understanding of the technical solutions that will be made available and use these as an opportunity to improve its end-to-end budget process. It is not likely that all necessary information and the related new budget processes will be available before the beginning of the budget formulation cycle for the biennium 2018-2019.

101. **In paragraph 100 of its report, the Board recommended that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs perform a skills needs assessment of the standard fund management process as described in the latest guidance and develop a costed training plan for staff at all levels, including increasing management capability both in the field and at Headquarters.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2015 |

102. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has launched an ongoing training series for staff to build their capacity and skills on the grant management system in various locations as of June 2015. Surge missions carried out by staff of the Funding Coordination Unit are used to implement the latest fund management processes and to train local staff. An external consultant has developed the training framework and is proceeding with the delivery of the training modules.

103. **In paragraph 103 of its report, the Board recommended that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs require clusters and technical review boards to strengthen the consideration of previous project and implementing partner performance when recommending a project for approval by the humanitarian coordinator. This should include an assessment of:**

- **The non-governmental organizations concerned, including past delivery performance across United Nations entities and due diligence on the company and key individuals**
- **The type of project, including the likelihood of successful delivery of the intended benefits, for example, distribution of cash vouchers (high risk) versus construction (lower risk)**
- **The location of the project and the ability to monitor progress.**

*Department responsible*: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: Medium

*Target date*: Fourth quarter of 2015

104. New guidelines are being rolled out country by country in a progressive manner. All data collected since 2010 have now been added to the grants management system so that business intelligence functionality can be established. An inter-agency working group on data exchange was set up to create a catalogue function that allows various United Nations entities to compare their past delivery performance and due diligence with those of other partners, including the sanctions list of vendors, the Central Emergency Response Fund, the funding tracking service and their equivalents in other United Nations entities.

105. **In paragraph 114 of its report, the Board recommended that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs work with other United Nations entities to establish formal requirements for information-sharing on the performance of implementing partners in each country office.**

*Department responsible*: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: Medium

*Target date*: Fourth quarter of 2016

106. In response to a call by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for the establishment of formal information-sharing mechanisms, two task forces are now dealing with this matter, as described below.

107. The United Nations Development Group has set up a task force on risk management in fragile States to identify policy gaps and prepare recommendations on how to reinforce risk management practices in an inter-agency environment. The task force will focus on three key deliverables: (a) an overview of current United Nations risk management practices in an integrated programme and funding environment with special focus on conflict and transitions settings; (b) an analysis of policy gaps in current risk management practice, based on a review of risk management deficiencies in the light of recent experiences; and (c) recommendations for additional policy content required to reinforce risk management practices, in particular in conflict and transition settings. As a part of this work, the issue of sharing information on fraud cases detected or investigated will be addressed.

108. The High-level Committee on Management requested the establishment of a task force to report back to it. Such a task force was established, and it is looking at the feasibility of adapting the United Nations Global Marketplace as a platform to track fraud cases related to implementing partners. It will also explore alternative means of information-sharing.

109. At the field level, the functions of the country-based pooled funds advisory boards include undertaking periodic risk analysis, sharing information regarding implementing partners and reviewing the risk management plan of the fund, in accordance with the risk management framework of the funds. The board in each country comprises various stakeholders, including the humanitarian coordinator, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, donors, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.

110. **In paragraph 125 of its report, the Board recommended that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs accelerate implementation of the improved controls established in the global guidance and accountability framework. This should be done with a more risk-based and flexible approach to the management of implementing partners in country operations involving:**

(a) **Risk assessments to vet implementing partners to create a pool of trusted suppliers;**

(b) **Revised funding arrangements where high-risk implementing partners received an initial payment lower than the current initial 80 per cent payment;**

(c) **Enhanced monitoring arrangements where, for example, high-risk projects should be subject to interim audits/inspections using audit access rights, while monitoring of lower-risk projects could be based on visits from regional staff;**

(d) **Working with the Office of Legal Affairs to strengthen the current memorandum of understanding between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and implementing partners.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Departments responsible*: | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs/ Office of Legal Affairs |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2016 |

111. The global guidelines for country-based pool funds, which include a comprehensive accountability framework, are being implemented across all funds. The global guidelines also introduce a revised memorandum of understanding with implementing partners, which includes strengthened provisions on risk management.

112. **In paragraph 136 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration raise awareness of fraud risks by establishing a clear code of conduct (recognizing that a code of conduct includes requirements wider than fraud), reinforced through regular communication of fraud issues and through mandatory training courses for all staff.**

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|---|---|
| *Departments responsible*: | Executive Office of the Secretary-General/Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2017 |

113. Some regulatory frameworks already exist, including the standards of conducts for the international civil service, the ethics guide, the Financial Regulations and Rules and the Staff Regulations and Rules. Once an anti-fraud policy is adopted by the Secretariat, additional communications channels will be considered to enhance staff awareness.

114. **In paragraph 142 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration conduct a comprehensive fraud risk assessment, using in-depth research in high-risk areas, to determine the Organization's vulnerabilities and exposure to risks of fraud from both internal and external sources.**

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|---|---|
| *Departments responsible*: | Department of Management/Ethics Office/ Office of Internal Oversight Services |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2017 |

115. Refer to the Administration's comment above with respect to the recommendation contained in paragraph 128 of the report of the Board for the year ended 31 December 2014 (A/70/5 (Vol. I), chap. II).

116. **In paragraph 143 of its report, the Board also recommended that the Administration support the development of OIOS as a central expert resource to support and work with departments to assess, analyse and act upon all significant fraud risks.**

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|---|---|
| *Departments responsible*: | Executive Office of the Secretary-General/Ethics Office/Department of Management/Office of Internal Oversight Services/Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2017 |

117. Refer to the Administration's comments above with regard to the recommendation contained in paragraph 128 of the report of the Board for the year ended 31 December 2014 (A/70/5 (Vol. I), chap. II).

118. **In paragraph 147 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration review and rationalize the current suite of policy and guidance material on fraud and other misconduct to provide staff and others with clarity concerning the correct procedures to follow when a fraud was discovered.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Departments responsible*: | Department of Management/Office of Internal Oversight Services/Office of Legal Affairs/Ethics Office |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2017 |

119. Refer to the Administration's comments above for the recommendation contained in paragraph 128 of the report of the Board for the year ended 31 December 2014 (A/70/5 (Vol. I), chap. II).

120. **In paragraph 148 of its report, the Board also recommended that the Administration establish a central intake mechanism for all reporting of staff grievances and suspected fraud, allowing the cases to be properly screened and assessed and sent to the right part of the Organization for action, and facilitating improved data collection.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Office of Internal Oversight Services |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2017 |

121. OIOS is continuing to implement its new investigations case management system, "GoCase", which is expected to be fully operational in September 2015. GoCase will provide the necessary electronic platform to receive global reports of possible misconduct as a first step towards a central intake mechanism. However, with the focus being on GoCase development and deployment, the central intake initiative has not moved forward from the original concept, which would require clarification on buy-in from other client and stakeholder groups and appropriate resource and funding arrangements for the development of an application based on GoCase.

122. It should be noted that a central intake mechanism will also require development and/or finalization of a related policy and an administrative instruction with regard to the reporting and investigation of potential misconduct, including fraud.

123. **In paragraph 151 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration develop a framework of actions and arrangements for the systematic legal pursuit of all proven cases of fraud.**

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|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Office of Legal Affairs |
| *Status*: | Implemented |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Not applicable |

124. The Administration notes that it already has a framework of actions and arrangements in place for the systematic pursuit of cases of fraud and therefore this recommendation has already been implemented.

125. **In paragraph 155 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration update and enhance its whistle-blowing policies and procedures to cover the risk of both internal and external wrongdoing.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Departments responsible*: | Executive Office of the Secretary-General/ Ethics Office/Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Second quarter of 2016 |

126. The Ethics Office has proposed exhaustive policy amendments to the Secretary-General's Bulletin on protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations (ST/SGB/2005/21), put forward for consultation with the Staff Management Coordination Committee, which provide: refinement of the definition of protected activity; information regarding the availability of remedial action, and, for the first time, a prevention mandate. Internal and external reporting procedures are prominently featured in these revisions.

127. **In paragraph 159 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration develop an integrated strategic approach to tackling fraud, drawing on the many practical examples of good practice being adopted across the world and adapting these to the Organization's circumstances. The first step would be assessing and understanding the type and scale of fraud threats to which the United Nations was exposed.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Departments responsible*: | Executive Office of the Secretary-General/Department of Management/Ethics Office/Office of Legal Affairs/ Office of Internal Oversight Services/Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2017 |

128. Refer to the Administration's comment above for the recommendation contained in paragraph 128 of the report of the Board for the year ended 31 December 2014 (A/70/5 (Vol. I), chap. II).

129. **In paragraph 164 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration develop a medium- to long-term strategic workforce strategy and operational workforce plans. These should be informed by a review of the Organization's strategy that identified any gaps in headcount, grades, knowledge and skills.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2020 |

130. The Administration initiated a new workforce planning project in early 2014 to formulate a standardized methodology to perform workforce planning. It will continue to be reviewed and enhanced in coordination with the Umoja and mobility programmes over the next several years.

131. **In paragraph 169 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration establish performance measures of the effectiveness of the recruitment process around getting "the right person, with the right skills, to the right position, at the right time and at the right cost".**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | Implemented |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Not applicable |

132. Performance measures were established. Refer to programme 25, Management and support services, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2016-2017 (A/69/6 (Prog. 25)).

133. **In paragraph 170 of its report, the Board also recommended that the Administration perform an end-to-end review of the recruitment process to identify opportunities to reduce the lead time to recruit from the point at which a vacancy occurred until the post was filled.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2015 |

134. A review of the current recruitment processes is in progress and will be extended to incorporate the mobility implementation design processes.

135. **In paragraph 177 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration develop a skills strategy for staff based on an improved understanding of current capability and existing skills gaps such as commercial skills for major projects, and on the skills required following the implementation of IPSAS and the roll-out of Umoja, such as professional training in financial management skills to lead financial management improvement and provide more strategic advisory services to the wider business.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2016 |

136. In collaboration with other departments and offices, the Office of Human Resources Management will develop a skills strategy to complement its learning and career support strategy. Plans are also under way to review the opportunities for formal professional development training for accounting and finance staff under the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy qualification programme that is being used by other United Nations system organizations.

137. **In paragraph 184 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration review and improve the appraisal system to enable more effective monitoring of performance trends and implementation of remedial action or rewards following completion of staff performance evaluations.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Second quarter of 2016 |

138. With respect to the first part of the recommendation, the Office of Human Resources Management has begun work on enabling more effective monitoring of performance trends. With respect to the second part, the Office will take steps on remedial action or rewards once the General Assembly has reviewed the performance management proposal at the first resumed part of its seventieth session.

139. **In paragraph 80 of its report for the biennium ended 31 December 2011 (A/67/5 (Vol. I), and Corr.1 and Corr.2, chap. II), the Board recommended that the Administration review the disclosures in future financial statements with a view to providing more detailed commentary on the reasons for the increased holdings of investments and cash pools.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | Implemented |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Not applicable |

140. Movements in investments and cash pools are included in the management discussions and analysis contained in the financial report that accompanies the audited financial statements of the United Nations for the year ended 31 December 2014 (see A/70/5 (Vol. I)).

141. **As indicated in paragraph 95 of its report, the Administration agreed with the Board's recommendation that it require all staff to have undertaken contract management training prior to taking up contract management responsibility. Such training should cover key aspects of contract management such as contract administration, vendor relationship management, risk management, and performance evaluation and management.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2015 |

142. The Procurement Division has developed an online training course on contract management that is available through the Procurement Training Campus. The course describes various aspects of contract management in the public sector, providing a solid foundation for effective contract management. It is planned that the course will be mandatory under the new learning and career support strategy of the Office of Human Resources Management, at which point the Under-Secretary-General for Management will inform all heads of departments and offices to take the action necessary to ensure that all staff under their supervision who carry out contract management functions undertake this training.

143. **As indicated in paragraph 130 of its report, the Administration agreed with the Board's recommendation that the Department of Management review the delegations granted to the United Nations Office at Vienna and the United Nations Office at Geneva to ensure that delegated procurement authority was sufficiently clear.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | First quarter of 2016 |

144. The review of delegations of authority granted to the United Nations Office at Vienna and the United Nations Office at Geneva is ongoing.

145. **As indicated in paragraph 145 of its report, the Administration agreed with the Board's recommendation that it: (a) develop more outcome-focused objectives and indicators of achievement; (b) establish clear chains from indicators of resource use and activity, through indicators of output to achievement of high-level objectives; and (c) make subparagraphs (a) and (b) above a clearly articulated responsibility of the Under-Secretaries-General for their respective departments.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | Implemented |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Not applicable |

146. The Administration presented a proposal containing more outcome-oriented strategic frameworks to the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its fifty-fifth session.

147. **As indicated in paragraph 176 of its report, the Administration agreed with the Board's recommendation that, in support of existing work on developing risk management in the United Nations, the Management Committee: (a) periodically identify the top risks facing the Organization and communicate that information to all managers; and (b) develop high-level and regular (monthly) reporting on the current status of the risks and associated mitigating strategies.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Departments responsible*: | Executive Office of the Secretary-General/ Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Ongoing |

148. The Management Committee led the first Secretariat-wide risk assessment, identified six critical risks and assigned corporate risk owners to coordinate the Organization-wide response. The risk register and the governance structures were formally approved by the Secretary-General in September 2014. The Committee will continue to have a central role in the periodic monitoring of the status of critical risks and associated mitigating strategies through regular reporting by the relevant corporate risk owners.

149. **As indicated in paragraph 183 of its report, the Administration agreed with the Board's recommendation that United Nations senior management set out an action plan addressing the key lessons identified by the Board on business transformation, to demonstrate and track how it was developing and implementing a more strategic and holistic grip on the direction and delivery of the business transformation programmes.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Departments responsible*: | Executive Office of the Secretary-General/ Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Ongoing |

150. Under the name of "organizational transformation", the concurrent implementation of major transformation initiatives has been identified as one of the major risks facing the Organization. The risk action plan, which is informed by the Board's analysis of key lessons, has been prepared.

151. **As indicated in paragraph 25 of its report for the biennium ended 31 December 2009 (A/65/5 (Vol. I), chap. II), the Administration agreed with the Board's recommendation that it: (a) plan for the automated preparation of the financial statements under Umoja; and (b) without waiting for the implementation of Umoja, enhance internal documentation on the preparation of the financial statements and, more generally, on all financial procedures, notably by updating the Financial Manual.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2016 |

152. The software needed to interface with Umoja for the automation of financial statement preparation had been purchased. The related implementation project will be launched soon and is expected to last about six months. In the meantime, the Administration has already summarized the financial statements process used during the transitional period in the financial statements instructions.

153. **As indicated in paragraph 62 of its report, the Administration agreed with the Board's recommendation that it define a strategy to streamline and further automate the management of voluntary contributions, along the lines of the redesign of assessed contributions procedures.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2015 |

154. The automation of voluntary contributions will be considered as part of Umoja deployment. The target date continues to be based on the Umoja deployment schedule.

155. **As indicated in paragraph 66 of its report, the Administration agreed with the Board's recommendation that it develop indicators to measure the processing times for contributions.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2015 |

156. The target date for the implementation of this recommendation continues to be based on the Umoja deployment schedule.

157. **As indicated in paragraph 160 of its report, the Administration agreed with the Board's recommendation that it strengthen internal controls to ensure the accuracy of its payable and receivable balances with counterpart entities as at the end of the financial period.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2015 |

158. The implementation of this recommendation continues to be tied to the deployment of Umoja, given that it will provide for a consolidated view of payable and receivable balances with counterpart entities.

159. **As indicated in paragraph 164 of its report, the Administration agreed with the Board's recommendation that it reduce the time taken for certifying invoices so as to conform to accrual-based accounting.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2015 |

160. The time taken for certifying invoices will be further reduced with the full deployment of Umoja in clusters 3 and 4.

161. **In paragraph 387 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration draw up a schedule by which the staff members who had not taken the mandatory training programmes would be obliged to do so in a close time limit (one year or 18 months), and that the effective implementation be verified.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2015 |

162. The Office of Human Resources Management will continue to deploy the learning management system in Inspira to field missions. Over the next year, this process will help to improve the ability of the Organization to track mandatory training requirements.

163. The roll-out of the learning management system to peacekeeping missions is scheduled to restart after the deployment of the version 9.2 upgrade of Inspira in October 2015. The Office of Human Resources Management will also analyse the other challenges related to tracking compliance and devise possible solutions. Among these challenges is the issue of determining which courses should be mandatory, which is being addressed through an interdepartmental working group.

164. **As indicated in paragraph 437 of its report, the Administration agreed with the Board's recommendation that it take appropriate measures to ensure that the "Carbon" project was interfaced with Umoja.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department for General Assembly and Conference Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | Medium |
| *Target date*: | Second quarter of 2017 |

165. In collaboration with the Umoja team, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management identified required data interfaces between Umoja and the meeting management system called "gMeets" (formerly known as "Carbon"), as well as the contractual management application system. The estimated target date for the implementation of interfaces for the conference management solution with Umoja Extension 2 remains June 2017. For the implementation of data interfaces between the application system and Umoja Foundation, the Department provided the Umoja team responsible for building the data interfaces with the technical specifications, including functional details, a technical overview and required data fields from Umoja.

# III. Capital master plan

## A. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Board of Auditors on the capital master plan for the year ended 31 December 2014

### Overview

166. Set out below is the information requested by the General Assembly on the status of implementation of recommendations contained in the report of the Board of Auditors on the capital master plan for the year ended 31 December 2014 (A/70/5 (Vol. V)).

167. Table 5 summarizes the status of implementation of all new recommendations of the Board as of August 2015.

Table 5
**Status of implementation of all recommendations**

| *Department responsible* | *Number of recommendations* | *Implemented* | *In progress* | *Target date set* | *No target date* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Department of Management | 5 | – | 5 | 5 | – |
| **Total** | **5** | **–** | **5** | **5** | |
| **Percentage** | **100** | **–** | **100** | | |

168. As indicated in table 5, all five of the recommendations made by the Board are in progress, out of which four are scheduled for implementation by the end of 2015 and one by the end of 2016.

### Detailed information on implementation status

169. **In paragraph 17 (a) of the summary of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration manage the capital master plan to successful completion by continuing to closely manage the remaining works to ensure delivery by December 2016 within the $49 million budget.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: High

*Target date*: Fourth quarter of 2016

170. The Administration will continue to closely manage the remaining work to ensure delivery by December 2016. With regard to core technical staff of the capital master plan project, one staff member has already taken up a position in the Office of Central Support Services and two others will be retained in the Office to continue with residual activities and will be paid from the budget of the capital master plan. Similarly, a few core administrative staff will be retained until the end of 2015 to

continue closing activities. These staff resources are sufficient to manage the remaining work that will be managed by the Office.

171. **In paragraph 17 (b) of the summary of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration manage the capital master plan to successful completion by managing and reporting that the project's outcomes had been delivered, including financial and non-financial benefits expected and achieved from the investment in the capital master plan.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2015 |

172. The information referred to in the recommendation is included in the Secretary-General's thirteenth annual progress report on the implementation of the capital master plan, which will be submitted to the General Assembly.

173. **In paragraph 17 (c) of the summary of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration manage the capital master plan to successful completion by accelerating closure of the remaining capital master plan contracts to increase certainty around final project costs and to release any potential savings.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2015 |

174. The Office of the Capital Master Plan is in daily contact with the construction manager and monitors the progress of the work, the provision of the close-out documentation, the issuance of the invoices and the reconciliation of the accounts. With respect to close-out documentation, the construction manager is actively working through the list of documents pending closure, including requests for approval, change order requests and contingency requests. The construction manager alerts the Office of pending items and it coordinates with the programme manager in order to provide both thorough and expedited reviews to ensure the suitability of costs prior to closures. In addition to daily working-level coordination, the Office holds weekly coordination meetings with the construction manager to review the project status and schedule, and conducts daily bilateral meetings with teams working on specific subprojects to resolve all issues. The Office also issues letters to the construction manager reiterating the close-out deadlines and the need to expedite the activities.

175. **In paragraph 17 (d) of the summary of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration manage the capital master plan to successful completion by reporting the full amount of any savings arising from contract closure and introducing appropriate governance mechanisms to determine the**

**use that could be made of such savings, including specific consideration of returning savings to Member States.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: High

*Target date*: Fourth quarter of 2015

176. The information referred to in the recommendation is included in the Secretary-General's thirteenth annual progress report on the implementation of the capital master plan, which will be submitted to the General Assembly.

177. **In paragraph 17 (e) of the summary of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration manage the capital master plan to successful completion by applying wider learning from the capital master plan, including lessons documented in the Board's recent lessons-learned report, to future major projects.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: High

*Target date*: Fourth quarter of 2015

178. The Office of Central Support Services included a comprehensive list of lessons learned from recent projects undertaken by the Organization, including the capital master plan, in annex II to the report of the Secretary-General on the strategic capital review (A/69/760). In addition, the Office will include that list in the global guidelines for the management of construction projects, scheduled for issuance by the end of 2015. The Office will also incorporate additional information from the Board's recent lessons-learned report into the global guidelines referred to above.

## B. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the reports of the Board of Auditors on the capital master plan for prior financial periods

### Overview

179. In paragraph 18 of its resolution 69/249 A, the General Assembly reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to provide a full explanation for delays in the implementation of the recommendations of the Board for prior periods, in particular those recommendations not yet fully implemented that were two or more years old.

180. As of August 2015, the overall status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the Board's reports on the capital master plan for the past three years is shown in table 6.

Table 6
**Overall status of implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors on the capital master plan from prior periods as of August 2015**

| *Year report No.* | *Fully implemented* | *In progress* | *Closed by the Board/ overtaken by events* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2011/(A/67/5 (Vol. V)) | 6 | – | 6 | 12 |
| 2012/(A/68/5 (Vol. V)) | 2 | 4 | 3 | 9 |
| 2013/(A/69/5 (Vol. V)) | – | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| **Total** | **8** | **7** | **10** | **25** |
| **Percentage** | **32** | **28** | **40** | **100** |

181. In annex II to its report on the capital master plan for the year ended 31 December 2014 (A/70/5 (Vol. V)), the Board provided a summary of the status of implementation as of April 2015 of its nine extant recommendations relating to prior periods. Of those nine recommendations, two (22 per cent) had been fully implemented, six (67 per cent) were in progress and one (11 per cent) had been overtaken by events and closed by the Board. Information is provided below on the six recommendations that were in progress and is set out in the order in which the recommendations were presented in annex II.

182. Table 7 summarizes the overall situation as of August 2015.

Table 7
**Status of implementation of recommendations from prior periods considered not fully implemented in annex II to the report of the Board of Auditors on the capital master plan for the year ended 31 December 2014**

| *Department responsible* | *Number of recommendations* | *Implemented* | *In progress* | *Target date set* | *No target date* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Department of Management | 6 | – | 6 | 6 | – |
| **Total** | **6** | **–** | **6** | **6** | **–** |
| **Percentage** | **100** | **–** | **100** | | |

183. As indicated in table 7, the six recommendations considered not fully implemented by the Board remained in progress as of August 2015, with two scheduled for implementation by the end of 2015 and the other four by the end of 2016.

**Detailed information on implementation status**

184. **In paragraph 39 of its report for the year ended 31 December 2012 (A/68/5 (Vol. V)), the Board recommended that, for future projects of this nature, the Administration develop a risk-based approach to determining, allocating and reporting contingency funds on best practice in modern project management.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: Medium

*Target date*: Fourth quarter of 2015

185. A risk-based approach has been used to establish and manage contingency funds for the strategic heritage plan in Geneva. A risk-based approach is also being used to establish and manage contingency funds for the Africa Hall renovation project and other major capital projects being developed under the umbrella of the strategic capital review. The experiences gathered in these projects will be used to develop a general risk management approach, including contingency fund management for major projects. This will be promulgated under the general guidance on capital construction, renovation and major maintenance projects being developed by the Office of Central Support Services.

186. **In paragraph 77 of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration adopt a whole life cycle asset investment strategy and assess costed options for the through-life maintenance of the Headquarters buildings.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: High

*Target date*: First quarter of 2016

187. The Administration is developing a cost-benefit analysis for proactive versus reactive maintenance. An update on that analysis will be included in the next report of the Secretary-General on the strategic capital review that will be submitted to the General Assembly.

188. **In paragraph 82 of its report, the Board recommended that the Office of Central Support Services review its ongoing maintenance contracts, based on an assessment of the total scope of facilities management requirements after completion of the capital master plan, and assess the possibilities for obtaining better value from any future strategic commercial relationship.**

*Department responsible*: Department of Management

*Status*: In progress

*Priority*: Medium

*Target date*: Second quarter of 2016

189. As of April 2015, the Office of Central Support Services has put in place service contracts and in-house servicing arrangements for all building systems to be handed over by the capital master plan. The Office will monitor the experience of running these service contracts for a period of approximately one year to determine

whether the approach needs to be refined or adjusted to ensure the required levels of service and efficiency.

190. **In paragraph 25 (b) of the summary of its report for the year ended 31 December 2013 (A/69/5 (Vol. V)), the Board recommended that the Administration apply independent project assurance to all major projects. There was no established approach to providing independent project assurance in the United Nations.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | First quarter of 2016 |

191. The Administration considers that the governance mechanism established for the current large project, the strategic heritage plan, is appropriate and adequate. In addition, mechanisms are being reviewed to monitor projects developed under the umbrella of the strategic capital review, once those projects had been approved and transition into their planning and implementation phases. Developments in this area will be included in the next report of the Secretary-General on the strategic capital review that will be submitted to the General Assembly.

192. **In paragraph 25 (c) of the summary of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration review maintenance arrangements on the basis of the operating data with respect to new assets currently being collected and assess possibilities for obtaining better value for money for the Administration's requirements. As previously recommended, it was important to gather operating data about new assets, such as energy consumption, maintenance patterns and the skills required for the servicing of plant and equipment, so that contractors could bid on an informed basis. That should provide the Administration with a clearer view of its overall maintenance requirements.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | Fourth quarter of 2016 |

193. The Administration will continue to use operating data regarding the new assets to ensure that maintenance is being performed adequately and effectively. To that end, a comprehensive maintenance strategy has been established for all mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems to be implemented through either in-house staff, existing service contracts or the capital master plan maintenance packages. Furthermore, as part of that effort, the Administration intends to provide training to its in-house staff.

194. **In paragraph 25 (d) of the summary of its report, the Board recommended that the Administration commit to visible senior management leadership on the flexible workspace project. Experience suggested that, like all change initiatives**

**that had an impact on the day-to-day working environment, senior management leading by example would be vital in gaining staff buy-in and securing the intended benefits.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Department responsible*: | Department of Management |
| *Status*: | In progress |
| *Priority*: | High |
| *Target date*: | First quarter of 2018 |

195. The flexible workplace project has a plan of communication and engagement with all departments, beginning with their heads. Senior managers are being encouraged to show visible leadership by fully participating in the project, which will be executed between November 2015 and early 2018.

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**Seventieth session**
Item 71 (b) of the provisional agenda*
**Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

# Programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/16. It is focused on key initiatives undertaken by all major stakeholders in support of the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent and provides recommendations intended to sustain and capitalize on the momentum generated by the launch of the Decade.

* A/70/150.

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# I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/16. It is focused on the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, taking into account information and views provided by States, human rights bodies, mechanisms and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, regional organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations, including organizations of people of African descent.

2. The Decade, which began on 1 January 2015 and will end on 31 December 2024, was proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/237, with the theme "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development". By its resolution 69/16, the Assembly adopted a programme of activities for the implementation of the Decade.

3. The main objective of the Decade is to promote respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent. The General Assembly also identified the following specific objectives:

(a) To strengthen national, regional and international action and cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society;

(b) To promote a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies;

(c) To adopt and strengthen national, regional and international legal frameworks in accordance with the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and to ensure their full and effective implementation.

4. In addition to those objectives, the General Assembly recommended activities to be carried out, in particular by Member States. In the programme of activities, relevant United Nations programmes, funds, specialized agencies and other bodies, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), regional organizations, financial and development institutions, national human rights institutions and civil society are requested to take specific action.

5. The General Assembly appointed the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to act as coordinator of the Decade in order to follow up on the implementation of activities in the framework of the Decade. The programme of activities sets out recommendations for the coordinator and OHCHR, including the launch of a campaign to raise awareness of the contributions and situation of human rights of people of African descent, the strengthening of the fellowship programme for people of African descent during the Decade and the inclusion of a section on the Decade in the anti-discrimination database.

6. As at 30 June 2015, information for the present report had been received from Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, Italy, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the

United States of America, as well as from the Department of Public Information, UNESCO, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and the Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights had also provided information, as had the ombudsmen of Colombia and Ecuador. Numerous civil society organizations had also provided input.

7. The report is structured in line with the objectives of the Decade and is based on information received from the above-mentioned stakeholders.

# II. Implementation of the objectives and activities of the International Decade for People of African Descent

## A. Promote respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent

8. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance reported continuing discrimination against people of African descent in many European countries. In its annual report for 2014,[1] it noted reasons ranging from traditional racist stereotypes, often based on age-old images of black people during the era of colonialism and slavery, to perceptions of Africans as unwanted economic migrants. It reported that people of African descent continued to live disproportionally often in socially deprived residential areas, were more frequently stopped and searched by the police and had less favourable health-care outcomes than white populations. It also reported on the issue of the reproduction of stereotypical images of black people in cultural life, noting that the continuing public discussion about how to address the issue had shown very strong racist undertones among some commentators, which, according to it, revealed the true extent of the problem.

9. It is stated in the Commission's report that the number of refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants entering Europe continues to increase, owing to, among other things, continuing conflicts, insecurity and poverty. Many migrants seek to cross the Mediterranean Sea to reach the shores of Europe. The continuing economic and financial crisis in Europe has led to a growing fear among many citizens of hardening competition among newly arrived migrants, asylum seekers and refugees for jobs, affordable housing, reduced social services and welfare benefits. Increasingly, the various groups of migrants are seen not as contributing to enriching European societies, but as a threat to accustomed standards of wealth and social stability. Migrants are often particularly badly affected by the economic crisis, owing to pre-existing high levels of social exclusion, including lower levels of education, that make readjustment in a contracting labour market more difficult. Consequently, migrants are often also victimized because of their now-reduced social status, leading to multiple forms of discrimination. The Commission also stated that, while discussion of migration and the challenges that it posed was

[1] Available from www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/Annual_Reports/Annual%20report%202014.pdf.

necessary and legitimate, it was often used and exploited as a topic for populist politics and election campaigning.

10. Global Migration Policy Associates reported that a large proportion of migrants and descendants of migrants worldwide were people of African descent. Migrants often faced xenophobic and racist treatment in their countries of residence. For migrants of African descent, the discrimination and obstacles to social inclusion might be compounded by language barriers and risks of abusive treatment in employment, especially for those in irregular situations. It mentioned that, since the beginning of 2015, civil society groups had further mobilized in Europe and North Africa to assure safety, access to international protection and decent treatment for Africans who had left their countries owing to warfare, violations of human rights and/or the absence of conditions for a decent life. Concerns had been heightened by the tragic deaths of refugees and migrants from Africa and the Middle East crossing the Mediterranean Sea in the first months of 2015. Significant numbers of "survival migrants" and refugees from sub-Saharan Africa were attempting perilous crossings of North African deserts and the Mediterranean Sea in search of safe haven in Europe. It stressed the urgent need to provide access to protection and adequate humanitarian relief and to ensure the protection of the human rights of arriving migrants and refugees, a large number of whom were from Africa.

11. The Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights reported on her activities, including the preparation of a thematic study on issues relating to race and the criminal justice system in the United States of America in which she would focus on, in particular, the disproportionate use of force by the police and review the applicable international human rights standards, as well as information collected by the Commission in the framework of public hearings and recent emblematic cases. The report would also include recommendations to the United States on how to best address the existing challenges with regard to racial discrimination in the criminal justice system.

12. Owing to the growing concern over the treatment of African Americans by the United States criminal justice system and law enforcement authorities, the Commission has convened hearings on the issues. For example, on 16 March 2015, at the request of the Government, the Commission organized a hearing centred on the issue of race and the United States criminal justice system. Representatives of the Government noted the importance of that hearing, given the fiftieth anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery marches, and presented information on efforts to tackle racial discrimination in the criminal justice system, including a presidential task force on twenty-first-century policing, and on monitoring and litigation mechanisms aimed at eliminating such discrimination. The civil society organizations present at the hearings highlighted the disproportionate impact of the criminal justice system on African-American and Latino populations, in particular in the context of the so-called "broken windows" policy, pretrial detention, bail determinations and sentencing. The Commission reiterated that there was a need to increase the visibility of issues of race in the United States criminal justice system and for the State to develop a prevention strategy.

13. Furthermore, on 27 October 2014, the Commission organized, on its initiative, a hearing on racism in the justice system in the United States, at which it received information from civil society organizations and the Government. The petitioners

referred in particular to programmes marked by racial profiling, such as the "stop-and-frisk" programme in New York City, and the lack of criminal accountability in cases of excessive use of force by law enforcement officers.

14. On 20 March 2015, a hearing was held on reports of killings of young people of African descent in Brazil, at which the Commission received information concerning the alarming level of violence faced by Afro-Brazilian males between 15 and 29 years of age. According to the petitioners, State security forces and military police were among the perpetrators, reflecting a manifestation of the institutional racism and discrimination in the Brazilian security and justice systems. Concerns highlighted included alleged extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, excessive use of pretrial detention, a disproportionate number of detentions and an overrepresentation of Afro-Brazilians in the prison population.

15. Minority Rights Group reported on the situation of Dominicans of Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic and the State's discriminatory policy towards and detention and mass expulsion of such individuals.

16. AfroMadrid held a gathering of non-governmental organizations in June 2015 in which representatives of United Nations human rights mechanisms participated. In the outcome document of the meeting, the participants expressed solidarity with African Americans over the killings in South Carolina, United States, and the deaths of thousands of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea, calling upon Member States to provide an immediate and urgent solution to those problems. They also voiced their deep concern over the deaths of young people on the streets of the Americas, in particular in Brazil and Central America.

17. The Office of the Ombudsman of Colombia reported on its work in the recognition of people of African descent as victims of the internal armed conflict and on follow-up to the implementation of Decree No. 4635 (2011) on reparations and land restitution. It noted that the armed conflict had weakened the social structure and cultural integrity of Afro-Colombians and the Raizal and Palenquero peoples. The Office was working to ensure that the rights of Afro-Colombians, as victims of the armed conflict, were adequately taken into consideration in order to lay the foundation for sustainable change in the country and to ensure the recognition of their collective land rights. The Office also indicated that it handled complaints of discrimination and ensured that the collective rights of Afro-Colombians to free, informed and prior consent were respected when making decisions relating to the use and exploitation of their lands.

### 1. Women and girls

18. In the programme of activities, States are to mainstream a gender perspective when designing and monitoring public policies, taking into account the specific needs and realities of women and girls of African descent, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.

19. The United States reported on a project on women's entrepreneurship in the Americas, an initiative intended to leverage public-private partnerships to encourage inclusive economic growth in the western hemisphere. The initiative increases opportunities for women entrepreneurs to begin to enhance small and medium-sized enterprises by improving access to markets, capital, skills and capacity-building and leadership opportunities. The State Department has signed memorandums of

understanding to promote growth and entrepreneurship among such enterprises with the Governments of Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

20. From 29 September to 3 October 2014, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights conducted a visit to Colombia, during which it placed particular emphasis on the situation of women of African descent and received information about the barriers faced by such women in obtaining basic information from the State, including a lack of statistics disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, disability and other factors. It also received information about the impact of the armed conflict on women of African descent and on acts of physical, psychological and sexual violence committed during the conflict. The Commission recalled that the State must take into account the multiple forms of discrimination faced by women of African descent and help to facilitate their participation in policies relating to their human rights.

21. From 26 to 28 June 2015, the Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women organized a meeting in Nicaragua of women leaders from the region. The participants highlighted their human rights situation and requested specific action by States regarding their limited access to education, employment and sexual and reproductive rights, as well as their heightened vulnerability to gender-based violence and insecurity.

22. Ashanti Peru reported on the multiple forms of discrimination faced by young Afro-Peruvian women and on seminars held around the country to prevent maternal mortality and to raise awareness of sexual and reproductive care.

### 2. Capacity-building

23. OHCHR has paid special attention to strengthening knowledge and practical expertise with regard to human rights among leaders of African descent. It was specifically requested by the General Assembly to continue and strengthen its fellowship programme for people of African descent during the Decade. The programme provides participants with an intensive learning opportunity to deepen their understanding of the United Nations human rights instruments and mechanisms, with a focus on issues of particular relevance to people of African descent. The three-week programme, held in Geneva, generally coincides with sessions of human rights mechanisms, enabling fellows to gain a better understanding of the international human rights machinery. The 10 fellows are also offered the opportunity to gain practical experience and receive direct training from experts. The programme includes briefings by agencies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations.

24. The objective of the programme is to contribute to the creation of a new generation of activists of African descent with excellent backgrounds and practical experience that can be used by their communities and organizations. The programme also allows participants to better contribute to the protection and promotion of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of people of African descent in their countries.

25. In Colombia, to develop a national public policy to implement the Decade, OHCHR facilitated an exchange of views between sectors of civil society, in particular Afro-Colombian grass-roots representatives, and the Government. Two perspectives emerged. Government bodies and some sectors of civil society viewed

the Decade as an opportunity to give visibility to Afro-Colombians and to promote respect for their culture through a national campaign. Local social movements working on the right to land, economic, social and cultural rights and black women viewed the Decade as an opportunity to redress current disparities and structural discrimination that were the result of wrongs of history. Local movements also saw Afro-Colombians as one of the main victims of the armed conflict and of exploitation of their lands by extractive industries, which resulted in internal displacement. They requested the participation of Afro-Colombians in the peace process and that decisions affecting them should be taken with due respect to their right to free, prior and informed consent.

26. OHCHR continues its work with Governments on the formulation and development of national policies against racism, including with regard to people of African descent. Through its Regional Office for Central America, it supported national human rights institutions in the region to enhance their human rights monitoring capacity regarding people of African descent. In 2014, OHCHR worked with the national human rights institutions of El Salvador and Nicaragua to address cases of racism and racial discrimination against people of African descent and to strengthen their complaint mechanisms. It also trained more than 50 human rights officers from those institutions on how to implement intervention protocols in cases of racial discrimination. The protocols were developed by OHCHR in collaboration with the institutions and are guidelines on how to identify, register, handle and follow up on complaints of racism and racial discrimination. In June 2015, OHCHR, together with those institutions, developed an online survey to monitor the implementation of the protocols. With the information collected, OHCHR will assess the challenges encountered by the institutions in identifying, registering and dealing with cases of racial discrimination against people of African descent. In 2014, OHCHR provided technical support to the National Commission against Discrimination and the Office of the Ombudsman of Panama to develop a study on racial profiling. In 2015, OHCHR will draw up guidelines on how to prevent, identify, record and counter cases of racial profiling.

27. OHCHR has been providing anti-discrimination and gender-sensitive human rights training for public officials of the ministries of justice, health and education and the armed forces in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The training courses are among the preventive measures taken by the Government to tackle the racism and institutional discrimination faced by indigenous peoples, people of African descent and migrants.

### 3. Research

28. In the programme of activities, United Nations programmes, funds and offices are to develop studies in their respective areas of competence and expertise and to report on the themes of the Decade. In that regard, OHCHR is developing a publication on putting rights into practice with regard to people of African descent and the right to development. The document will serve as a practical guide for working together with people of African descent in communities around the world to enable them to realize their right to development. Although aimed primarily at Governments and United Nations bodies, it will also be useful for other international organizations, civil society and researchers. It is aimed at raising stakeholder awareness of the existing international legal framework and the rights, historical experiences and contemporary situation of people of African descent.

Practical examples, good practices and tools will be provided to assist United Nations bodies, States and civil society to plan, design, implement and monitor relevant and adequate development programmes for realizing the rights of people of African descent.

29. In the programme of activities, States are to design, implement and enforce effective measures to eliminate racial profiling. Police, security, immigration and detention officials make use of racial and ethnic profiling in different and pernicious ways, whether unconsciously or deliberately. Racial profiling can result in discriminatory decision-making by individual law enforcement officers or in law enforcement policies and practices that have a disproportionate impact on specific groups without any legitimate law enforcement purpose. It is often the result of deeply ingrained beliefs in entire institutions and society. To assist Member States in their efforts, OHCHR is developing a practical guide to counter racial profiling that will provide specific recommendations addressed to law enforcement officials to prevent and combat the practice.

30. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance dedicated his thematic report for 2015 to racial profiling (A/HRC/29/46). He stressed that the practice constituted a violation of the rights of the targeted groups or individuals because of its fundamentally discriminatory nature and because it exacerbated discrimination already suffered as a result of ethnic origin or minority status. He highlighted international, regional and national measures adopted to combat and prohibit racial profiling and called for legislative measures to counter discrimination and racism by law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, he called for States to gather law enforcement data, including statistics disaggregated by ethnicity and race, which were essential to proving the existence and extent of racial profiling.

31. As requested by the General Assembly, OHCHR created a new section in its database on practical means to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (anti-discrimination database)[2] focused on the objectives of the Decade. It includes news relating to the Decade, relevant information and documents and useful links.

32. UNESCO reported that it was contributing to the implementation of the Decade through two major programmes: the Slave Route Project, launched in 1994 to advance the understanding and remembrance of slavery and its consequences on modern history, and the *General History of Africa*, a collection of scientific publications launched in 1964 to address biased discourses on Africa and its history and highlight the contribution of African cultures and civilizations to the general progress of humanity.

33. At its meeting held in Mexico City in November 2014, the International Scientific Committee of the Slave Route Project discussed activities that could make a substantial and specific contribution to the Decade.

34. UNESCO has developed, on the occasion of the Decade, a 10-year agenda (2015-2024) to provide useful information on the issues addressed by the Decade and important historic dates relating to people of African descent. Through a

[2] See http://adsdatabase.ohchr.org/SitePages/Anti-discrimination%20database.aspx.

partnership with OHCHR, the agenda will be published in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

35. UNESCO is finalizing a publication that will contain an overview of available knowledge on the slave trade and slavery as a contribution to the Decade.

36. Progress has also been made by UNESCO in implementing the second phase of the *General History of Africa*, which consists of developing pedagogic material for formal and informal education and a ninth volume to update the collection. The pedagogic content developed by the drafting teams for African schools includes curricula outlines, teachers' guides and textbooks for the age groups (10-12 years, 13-16 years and 17-19 years).

## B. Promote a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies

37. In the programme of activities, States and the international community are called upon to celebrate the launch of the Decade. OHCHR, the Department of Public Information and the Office of the President of the General Assembly facilitated the launch through several events. On 9 December 2014, a public reading of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was held at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, New York City, to commemorate Human Rights Day (10 December).

38. The Decade was officially launched on Human Rights Day at Headquarters. Representatives of Member States, the United Nations, the four Durban follow-up mechanisms and civil society, including former fellows of the OHCHR fellowship programme, attended the launch. Speakers included the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services of South Africa, the Minister of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Policies on Racial Equality of Brazil and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy. Representatives of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards also participated in the event, as did the group of independent eminent experts on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

39. Events also included a press conference and meetings with civil society and delegations before and after the launch. The event was widely promoted by OHCHR and the Department of Public Information through various communications channels, including digital, audiovisual, webcast, print and social media platforms.

40. In Geneva, the permanent missions of Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Jamaica and the United States, together with OHCHR and the African Union, co-hosted an event on 16 December 2014 to celebrate the launch.

41. The Department of Public Information provided coverage of several other events relevant to the objectives of the Decade, including high-level meetings on Africa on the margins of the general debate of the sixty-ninth session of the General

Assembly and the celebration of Africa Day (25 May). During the reporting period, the Department issued 14 press releases (8 in English and 6 in French) on matters relating to the Decade.

42. On 22 April 2015, the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States celebrated the beginning of the Decade during a special meeting in which experts from countries of the region presented their vision and strategies with regard to how the commemoration could contribute to the advancement of people of African descent in the Americas. In June 2014, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States adopted a resolution in which countries reaffirmed the importance of the full and equal participation of people of African descent in all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life in the countries of the Americas.

43. On 20 March 2015, to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, OHCHR organized a panel discussion during the twenty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council entitled "Learning from historical tragedies to combat racial discrimination today", in which the panellists analysed the linkages between past and contemporary forms of racism. The panel featured the Minister of Justice of France, the Chair of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience and representatives of the Zeeland Archives in the Netherlands and UNESCO.

44. On 21 March 2015, at the request of Afro-Panamanian organizations, OHCHR, through its Regional Office for Central America, together with the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Panama, supported the launch of the Decade during the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

45. The Department of Public Information, in cooperation with OHCHR, produced promotional materials to observe the Decade, including posters in English, French and Spanish and commemorative pins featuring the Decade's logo. They were distributed through United Nations information centres and at events at Headquarters, including on Human Rights Day and upon the unveiling of the permanent memorial in honour of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The Department will launch a brochure with the text of the programme of activities in late 2015.

46. The Department, together with OHCHR, produced two *UN in Action* video stories in the six official languages for the Decade. The first piece, *Descendants of Slaves: Ancestral Land*, released in April 2015, tells the story of descendants of slaves — the Gullah Geechee people — who live in South Carolina and Georgia, United States. The second item, *Brazil: The Story of Slavery*, released in July 2015, is about the Quilombolas, who are Afro-Brazilian descendants of slaves fighting for land rights. Edited versions will be produced for other United Nations television products, including *UN Stories* and *21st Century*.

47. The April 2015 issue of the Department's *Africa Renewal* magazine contained an interview with the President of the General Assembly on the historical importance of the Decade, accompanied by a feature story exploring the lives of people of African descent who had moved from the United States and settled in Ghana.

48. OHCHR and United Nations information centres engaged with academic institutions, government agencies, civil society and the general public in promoting the objectives of the Decade. In June 2015, OHCHR participated in an inaugural

summit of black government leaders in Canada, convened by the Government and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, during which it presented the programme of activities. The roles and activities foreseen for Governments, the United Nations system, civil society and other relevant stakeholders were also outlined. The leaders focused on the role of Governments, specifically politicians and elected officials, in implementing the programme. They also agreed to maintain a special focus on young people of African descent. A number of follow-up initiatives are foreseen in Canada at various levels, with some already under way, including planning for a second such summit in 2016.

49. In Brazil, the Government launched the Decade with the participation of government officials, diplomats and many civil society representatives, especially leaders of African descent, representatives of non-governmental organizations, academics and media representatives. OHCHR was also represented at the opening ceremony. The launch was organized by the Secretariat for the Promotion of Policies on Racial Equality and the United Nations Resident Coordinator. The event was held in the framework of the eighth Latinidades festival, an annual event intended to highlight the experiences of black women from Latin America.

50. In the Congo, the United Nations Information Centre in Brazzaville carried out an interactive session on the Decade with government officials, university students and media representatives in July 2015.

51. The United Nations Information Centre in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, hosted a public exhibition, entitled "Forever free", at the Museum of Justice in the city of Niterói from March to April 2015.

52. The United Nations in Georgia and Universal Peace Federation Georgia organized an event entitled "Days of Africa in Georgia" from 27 April to 8 May 2015. Activities included student seminars, cultural performances, concerts, photography exhibitions and a football competition between two African and two local teams.

53. The visual identity for the Decade was developed by the Department of Public Information and OHCHR in the six official languages of the United Nations and is being used by United Nations information centres and OHCHR field offices worldwide. A dedicated, mobile-friendly and accessible website for the Decade went live in the official languages on the day of the launch of the Decade and has since been actively promoted through the communications platforms available to the Department, including social media.

54. The Department also organized a series of related events and activities at Headquarters and worldwide in the context of its "Remember slavery" programme, observed in 2015 under the theme "Women and slavery". The programme is aimed at mobilizing educators to teach about the causes and consequences of the transatlantic slave trade and to communicate the dangers of racism and prejudice. One such event was the unveiling of the permanent memorial in honour of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, *The Ark of Return*, on 25 March at Headquarters. As part of the unveiling, the Department produced a series of videos, radio programmes and feature stories on the memorial in the six official languages, Kiswahili and Portuguese.

55. Other events organized as part of the "Remember slavery" programme included a global student videoconference connecting 500 visiting high school

students at Headquarters with students in Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States; a cultural and culinary event in New York organized to celebrate the heritage and traditions that enslaved Africans brought to Europe and the Americas; and a briefing for non-governmental organizations on the impact of slavery on women's rights today, which was webcast live. Other related activities included screenings of *They Are We* by Emma Christopher at the American Museum of Natural History and *Selma* by Ava DuVernay at the United Nations and in partnership with the United States Mission to the United Nations and Paramount Pictures, in addition to a round-table discussion entitled "*The General History of Africa*: learning and teaching about African heritage", organized in partnership with UNESCO.

56. The Department also partnered with the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery in Nantes, France, to organize an exhibit entitled "Women and slavery: telling their stories", which was displayed at the Visitors Lobby at Headquarters. Materials for the United Nations information centres were produced in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

57. Activities were organized by United Nations information centres in close collaboration with the States Members of the Caribbean Community and the African Union to mark the annual observance of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (25 March).

58. In Argentina, the National Institute to Combat Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism created a national forum for people of African descent and Africans to serve as a space where those communities could raise their concerns. It was also involved in the national household census and worked with the national statistical institute to include a question to self-identify as Afro-Argentinian. In its work on awareness-raising, Argentina has developed specific curricula and teaching material, including a textbook, *Somos Iguales y Diferentes*, that provides a guide for children on preventing discriminatory practices. The Institute has developed relevant radio and television spots. In follow-up to the Decade, Argentina is developing television spots about the history and culture of Afro-Argentinians, promoting recognition of their valuable contribution to society, increasing their visibility and challenging negative stereotypes. Argentina also established 8 November as its national day for Afro-Argentinians and Afro-culture and on 25 July celebrates the International Day of Afro-Latina, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women.

59. On 21 May 2015, Colombia launched the Decade with a national campaign entitled "Time to fight racism". On that day, more than 1 million public servants took an online course intended primarily to raise awareness of Colombian cultural and racial diversity. In addition, the course covered the national legal framework with regard to Afro-Colombians and their history, culture and rich contribution to society. Several public figures were invited to record video messages on equality and non-discrimination that were broadcast nationwide. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provided a message in which he recalled the unequal treatment before the law, the alarming rates of police violence, the disproportionate recourse to detention and the harsher sentences that people of African descent faced in the justice system, in addition to the low level of political participation and the fact that an intolerable number of people of African descent lacked their fundamental right to development. Statements were also provided by world-famous personalities such as Kofi Annan, renowned footballers from the

national team, actors, actresses, children and other personalities. A second course aimed at public officials is envisaged and will be compulsory for recruitment to government positions.

60. Colombia is developing a national action plan for the implementation of the Decade. Afro-Colombians will be involved and consulted in the process. The plan will contain a comprehensive strategy and specific policies for the betterment of Afro-Colombian lives. To regularly assess the situation of people of African descent and the impact of the national policies, Colombia will collect, compile and analyse data on the situation of Afro-Colombians with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank and the United States Agency for International Development. Colombia reaffirmed its commitment with regard to an upcoming conference for people of African descent for the Latin American and Caribbean region and a possible declaration on the promotion and protection of the human rights of people of African descent.

61. Cuba reported on its work to promote respect for the culture, identity, history and heritage of people of African descent. It described measures taken to include, in its education curricula at all levels, the history of Africa, the transatlantic slave trade, slavery and the struggle for its abolition, the recognition of people of African descent as national heroes and the contemporary history of people of African descent. It also reported on research on past and present conditions of people of African descent, the promotion of literature and other artistic expressions by Afro-Cuban artists, its work through museums, in particular the Museum of the Slave Route, its support for audiovisual and radio programmes to raise awareness of the existence of racism and racial discrimination and promote mutual understanding. Cuba also reported that, taking advantage of the celebrations to mark the five-hundredth anniversary of the founding of Santiago de Cuba, several activities had been conducted in July 2015 to acknowledge and recognize the contribution of people of African descent to the construction of Cuban national identity.

62. Peru reported that the Ministry of Culture was the government body responsible for the implementation of the activities in the framework of the Decade. It indicated that, in the coming months, it would adopt a national development action plan for Afro-Peruvians, aimed at remedying disparities in the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms affecting Afro-Peruvians and protecting them from further discrimination. Peru reported that such disparities and de facto inequalities resulted from the circumstances of history that continued to deny Afro-Peruvians the full enjoyment of human rights. In that regard, the plan, together with other policies, would contribute to correcting current disparities and prevent further imbalances from arising. The plan would be in line with other national plans, including on strategic development and human rights. It would encompass all national policies addressed to Afro-Peruvians so as to implement commitments made by the Government in the framework of the Decade, the Organization of American States and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. Among the activities to give visibility to Afro-Peruvians, a public launch of the Decade was envisaged with the presence of ministers, diplomats, representatives of development institutions, the United Nations and members of civil society, including Afro-Peruvians. In addition, seminars and round tables on challenges facing Peru in the implementation of the Decade and the historic path and current situation of Afro-Peruvians would also be organized in 2015. Peru has proclaimed June as Afro-Peruvian Culture Month and 4 June as the Day of Afro-Peruvian

Culture in honour of the poet, journalist and researcher of Afro-Peruvian cultural heritage, Nicomedes Santa Cruz.

63. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reported that, to mark the launch of the Decade, the Institute of the Black World 21st Century, in collaboration with the Caribbean Reparations Commission, had hosted an international reparations summit in New York in April 2015.

## C. Strengthen national, regional and international action and cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society

64. OHCHR is working closely with United Nations bodies, in particular the Department of Public Information and UNESCO, and other stakeholders to implement the aims and objectives of the Decade effectively.

65. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as coordinator of the Decade, is seeking to implement this part of the programme through the promotion of inter-agency cooperation and the creation of opportunities for greater direct contact between representatives of people of African descent and the United Nations system. He is making use of the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities to incorporate issues pertaining to people of African descent into the work of the United Nations system. The network's action plan contains initiatives to support United Nations work to promote and protect the rights of people of African descent.

66. The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent was directly involved in the development of the programme of activities and the theme for the Decade. The Working Group has continued to actively promote and participate in activities to assist stakeholders (see A/70/309).

67. The Working Group also plays a vital role in facilitating and encouraging inter-agency cooperation. On 19 November 2014, at the seventh meeting of the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, the Chair of the Working Group provided a briefing on the Decade. She emphasized the importance of the Decade and encouraged the members of the network to use the Decade to accord priority to activities to promote and protect the rights of people of African descent. It was noted that the themes of the Decade — justice, recognition and development — reflected some of the focus areas of the network in implementing the guidance note of the Secretary-General on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, in particular with a view to combating racial discrimination, including in relation to people of African descent. In that regard, the members of the network agreed to increase collaboration around the activities relating to the Decade and to bring awareness and increased action during the Decade.

68. A forum for people of African descent has been established as part of the programme of activities to serve as a consultation mechanism, to be provided by one of the existing Durban follow-up mechanisms such as the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent or the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

The Human Rights Council is expected to take action and provide guidance on the Forum's format and modalities.

69. In anticipation of the discussion by the Human Rights Council, the coordinator of the Decade issued a call for submissions and invited interested stakeholders, individuals, groups and organizations to submit information on their vision for the Forum. The submissions received included views on the aims and objectives of the Forum, its thematic focus, format and agenda and how to ensure wide participation. OHCHR transmitted a compilation of the submissions received to Member States for consideration during their consultations.

70. OHCHR is organizing the first regional meeting on the Decade for Latin America and the Caribbean. It will be held in Brazil at the end of 2015. OHCHR wishes to express its appreciation to the Government of Brazil for hosting the meeting. The main objective will be to identify trends, priorities and obstacles at the national and regional levels and to formulate specific recommendations for action to be carried out to combat the racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance faced by people of African descent.

71. Regional cooperation is also important. OHCHR is working actively with the European Network of Equality Bodies and the Ibero-American Network of Agencies and Organizations against Discrimination. In May 2015, at the fourth meeting of the Ibero-American Network, held in Guatemala, OHCHR provided a briefing on the Decade and the action to be taken by equality bodies. Follow-up initiatives are foreseen, including support from OHCHR for a research competition on the human rights situation of people of African descent in Ibero-America.

72. At the bilateral level, under a joint action plan to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination and promote equality, the Governments of Brazil and the United States are to collaborate in promoting cooperation, understanding and exchange of information to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all. Themes for cooperation include education, equal access to employment and economic opportunities, equal protection of the law, racial disparities in health and environmental justice.

## III. Trust Fund for the Programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination

73. The Secretary-General established the Trust Fund for the Programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination in 1973 as a financial mechanism to implement the activities planned in the context of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (1973-1982). It was also used to fund activities during the second and third decades (1983-1992 and 1994-2003) and to cover expenditure relating to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, in 2001, and the Durban Review Conference, in 2009. Given that no further activities were planned under the Trust Fund, no new contributions were received after 2009 and all pending obligations were fulfilled, the Trust Fund was closed in 2014.

74. To secure the successful implementation of the activities of the Decade, OHCHR is working on its cost plan, which will contain a specific project devoted to activities relating to the Decade (under paragraph 18 of resolution 68/151). It will

be used to seek the support of all Member States. Any contributions received would be placed in an earmarked special fund or specific project for those activities and used exclusively for that purpose.

## IV. Conclusions and recommendations

75. **The first year of the Decade has brought promising and positive results with regard to the goal of promoting greater knowledge of and respect for the heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies. According to the information available, however, the fundamental issues of discrimination in the administration of justice, in particular racial profiling, and equal access to economic, social and cultural rights and effective participation remain among the main challenges faced by States.**

76. **As a first step in tackling those challenges, the United Nations, especially OHCHR, the Department of Public Information and UNESCO, and several States have launched campaigns to inform the public of the history, contributions, challenges, contemporary experiences and situation of the human rights of people of African descent.**

77. **At the operational level, pilot initiatives for dialogue and the promotion of issues pertaining to people of African descent have been established at the national, regional and international levels. Member States have reported on initiatives targeting people of African descent.**

78. **In view of the progress and challenges identified during the first year of the Decade, the following recommendations are made:**

(a) **To attain the goal and objectives set for the Decade, Member States should take specific steps to recognize people of African descent in their countries;**

(b) **States should establish national legislative frameworks for people of African descent and develop institutional policies and mechanisms so as to engage effectively on their issues, taking as a point of reference the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination;**

(c) **Continuing efforts should be made by Member States and international organizations, including the United Nations, for the full application and operationalization of the recommendations contained in the programme of activities;**

(d) **OHCHR should strengthen its analysis and development of studies in order to deepen knowledge of the human rights situation of people of African descent;**

(e) **All relevant stakeholders should contribute generously to the OHCHR special fund or specific project established for the activities of the Decade.**

United Nations A/70/340

General Assembly

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**Seventieth session**
Item 54 of the provisional agenda*
**United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East**

# Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/89, contains the text of replies received, from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Japan, Pakistan and the Republic of Korea, with regard to the requests contained in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 69/86, paragraph 4 of Assembly resolution 69/87 and paragraphs 26 and 27 of Assembly resolution 69/88 in response to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General to Israel and all other Member States on 14 May 2015. No information has been received from Member States regarding the implementation of resolution 69/89.

* A/70/150.

15-14317 (E) 100915

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# I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 69/89 on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues.

2. On 14 May 2015, the Secretary-General drew the attention of the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations to General Assembly resolutions 69/86 to 69/89, with the request that the Permanent Representative inform him by 10 July 2015 of any steps that his Government had taken or envisaged taking in the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolutions.

3. On the same date, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to all other Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of resolutions 69/86 to 69/89 and requesting information by 10 July 2015 concerning any action taken or envisaged in relation to the implementation of those resolutions.

4. Replies were received from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Japan, Pakistan and the Republic of Korea with regard to the requests contained in paragraph 4 of resolution 69/86, paragraph 4 of resolution 69/87 and paragraphs 26 and 27 of resolution 69/88. No information has been received from Member States regarding the implementation of resolution 69/89.

# II. Replies received from Member States

## Argentina

[Original: Spanish]
[22 July 2015]

In the wake of the 50 days of armed conflict between Israel and Gaza (in July and August 2014), Argentina undertook, at the International Conference on Palestine and Reconstructing Gaza, held in Cairo on 12 October 2014, to carry out a set of actions, which are now being implemented, in the following areas: work with displaced persons, water and sanitation, health, the elimination of unexploded ordnance, family farming, repair of the social and community fabric through sport and culture, psychosocial care, comprehensive care of young children at risk, a project to boost the fishing industry, a project on plant and animal health, livestock-raising in dry climates, forensic medicine and anthropology, a project on cooperation in health services for armed forces, improvement of the primary health-care system, improvement of immunization strategies and incorporation of new vaccines, awareness-raising about water-related illnesses, prevention of haemolytic uremic syndrome, and conservation agriculture in risk zones.

In December 2014, Argentina implemented a special humanitarian visa programme for foreigners affected by the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (the "Syria Programme"), which aims to provide a practical response to the serious humanitarian crisis still ravaging that country.

The programme's beneficiaries include not only Syrian nationals and their relatives, but Palestinian nationals as well, provided that they were ordinarily resident or had resided in the Syrian Arab Republic and received assistance from UNRWA.

In line with its position on this issue, Argentina has supported various initiatives in international forums aimed at alleviating the humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people.

## Australia

[Original: English]
[9 July 2015]

In 2014-2015, Australia provided $A 36 million to UNRWA, which was the largest amount that Australia has ever given to UNRWA in one financial year.

The amount of $A 36 million was made up of $A 20 million to the General Fund, $A 300,000 to the Department of Planning for monitoring and evaluation studies and $A 15.7 million for emergency and shelter assistance in Gaza ($A 10 million to the Gaza flash appeal for 2014 and $A 5.7 million to the occupied Palestinian territory emergency appeal for 2015).

## Belgium

[Original: French]
[10 July 2015]

Belgium, like all the States members of the European Union, voted in favour of General Assembly resolutions 69/86, 69/87, 69/88 and 69/89, adopted on 5 December 2014. It also aligned itself with those States in sponsoring two of those resolutions, namely resolution 69/86, entitled "Assistance to Palestine refugees", and resolution 69/89, entitled "Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues".

Among the contributions of Belgium in response to requests for aid and assistance for UNRWA are the following:

With regard to paragraph 4 of resolution 69/86, calling upon donors to strengthen their efforts to meet the anticipated needs of UNRWA, and paragraphs 26 and 27 of resolution 69/88, urging donors to support the Agency by providing or increasing contributions, Belgium is a long-standing financial supporter of UNRWA, which became one of its humanitarian partners after the publication of the Royal Decree of 19 April 2014. In 2014, Belgium remained in thirteenth place among donors to the regular budget (General Fund) and ranked sixteenth when all funding sources are taken into account. It contributed mainly to the regular budget, thereby enabling UNRWA to perform the core missions of basic education, basic health care, relief and social security, in accordance with the Agency's mandate. In 2015, Belgium committed to a three-year funding package in a total amount of €18,750,000. Annual instalments of €6,250,000 will be paid in 2015, 2016 and 2017. That contribution reflects Belgium's desire to provide flexible and predictable humanitarian funding.

With regard to the appeal in paragraph 4 of resolution 69/87 for contributions to UNRWA and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, Belgium has approved, in addition to the multi-year contribution of €18,750,000 to the regular budget of UNRWA, a financial framework in an amount of €3 million for humanitarian projects relating to food security, resilience, health and protection, to be implemented by non-governmental organizations in the occupied Palestinian

territories. The call for proposals closed on 6 July 2015. Five project proposals were received, in a total amount of €5,767,908. The project selection process is ongoing.

## Japan

[Original: English]
[1 July 2015]

Japan's contribution to UNRWA so far amounts to approximately $714 million and the contribution in fiscal year 2014 reached a record high of $45 million. In the current year, Japan has provided emergency grant aid of $200,000 through UNRWA for refugees affected by the cold wave in February. In March, Japan disbursed $32 million to supplement the contribution for fiscal year 2014, as well as $1.7 million as the voluntary contribution for fiscal year 2015 in May (Japan's fiscal year starts in April and ends in March).

## Pakistan

[Original: English]
[29 May 2015]

Pakistan's commitment to supporting the Palestinian cause, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian refugees remains its constant policy objective.

The Government of Pakistan supports the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) through an annual contribution. Last year, in the wake of the humanitarian disaster caused by the destruction of lives, property and livelihoods in Gaza owing to a military assault by Israeli occupation forces, the Government of Pakistan provided an additional $1 million to UNRWA in support of its relief and rehabilitation efforts.

Pakistan continues to believe that, while humanitarian assistance is necessary, the only viable solution to the conflict is through the creation of a viable, independent and contiguous State of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

## Republic of Korea

[Original: English]
[10 July 2015]

The Government of the Republic of Korea has contributed $60,000 in 2013, $98,000 in 2014 and $187,000 in 2015 to the budget of UNRWA.

In addition to the aforementioned contributions, the Government of the Republic of Korea has contributed $500,000 in 2014 for reconstruction in Gaza, $500,000 in 2015 for assistance to Palestinian refugees in Syria and $300,000 in 2015 for assistance to Palestinian refugees in Gaza as its contributions to the non-regular budget of UNRWA.

United Nations A/70/341

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**Seventieth session**
Item 55 of the provisional agenda*
**Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories**

# Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/90, concerns the provision of the necessary facilities and staff to support the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

* A/70/150.

15-14361 (E) 030915

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1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/90. In line with paragraph 8 of that resolution, the Secretariat continued to provide the necessary facilities and staff to support the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. In 2015, the Special Committee was represented by three new members, Amrith Rohan Perera, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in New York; Ramlan Bin Ibrahim, Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations in New York; and Aboubacar Sadikh Barry, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Senegal to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

2. The Special Committee was directly supported in the fulfilment of its mandate by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Department of Safety and Security, the Department of Public Information and the office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Jordan. In addition, the Special Committee engaged with OHCHR in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

3. Much of the support was related to the Special Committee's annual investigative mission to the region. In the light of the continuing practice of Israel of non-cooperation with the Special Committee, the latter was not able to visit the occupied territories. Moreover, in the light of the heightened security situation in the region, the Special Committee was not able to visit the Gaza Strip through Egypt at the Rafah crossing, as it had done in 2011 and 2012. The Special Committee therefore travelled to Amman from 4 to 9 August 2015. In addition, it held consultations with several Member States on 3 August 2015, in Geneva. During its mission to Amman, the Special Committee collected testimony and information from a number of victims, witnesses, officials and civil society representatives working on documenting and preventing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the occupied territories. These testimonies and briefings are recorded in the Special Committee's report, to be transmitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its seventieth session.

**Department of Public Information**

4. Pursuant to paragraph 8 (d) of resolution 69/90, the activities set out below were undertaken by the Department of Public Information.

5. Coverage and promotion of the activities of the Special Committee remained an important aspect of the work of the Department of Public Information, which continued to regularly feature related developments and issues, using a wide spectrum of traditional means of communication and various social media platforms in different languages.

6. The concerns and activities of the Special Committee continued to be prominently covered on the United Nations News Centre portal, one of the most visited segments of the United Nations mega site, in the six official languages of the United Nations. News stories appearing on the United Nations News Centre platform were also distributed through the social media accounts, including Facebook and Twitter, via Rich Site Summary feeds, and by means of the portal's e-mail news service subscription. In addition, United Nations News Centre stories were widely picked up by news aggregators around the world. The stories included

statements by the Secretary-General and the Human Rights Council and discussions relating to the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly, but not exclusively, during the 2014 conflict in Gaza.

7. The work of the Special Committee, issues pertaining to the human rights situation in the occupied territories, and the related activities of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, such as UNRWA, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, continued to be promoted through the United Nations website in the six official languages. Arabic language versions of the Special Committee's work received particular prominence and, through the social media, reached some 400,000 followers on the Department's Arabic social media accounts.

8. The Department's Meetings Coverage Section provided coverage of the Special Committee's reports when they were taken up by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and by the General Assembly. In that context, the Meetings Coverage Section issued a total of eight press releases in English and French during the reporting period. The Media and Accreditation and Liaison Unit, together with the associated Media Documents Centre, e-mailed the Special Committee's documents and related press releases to their clients and used social media to inform their followers about the Special Committee's activities.